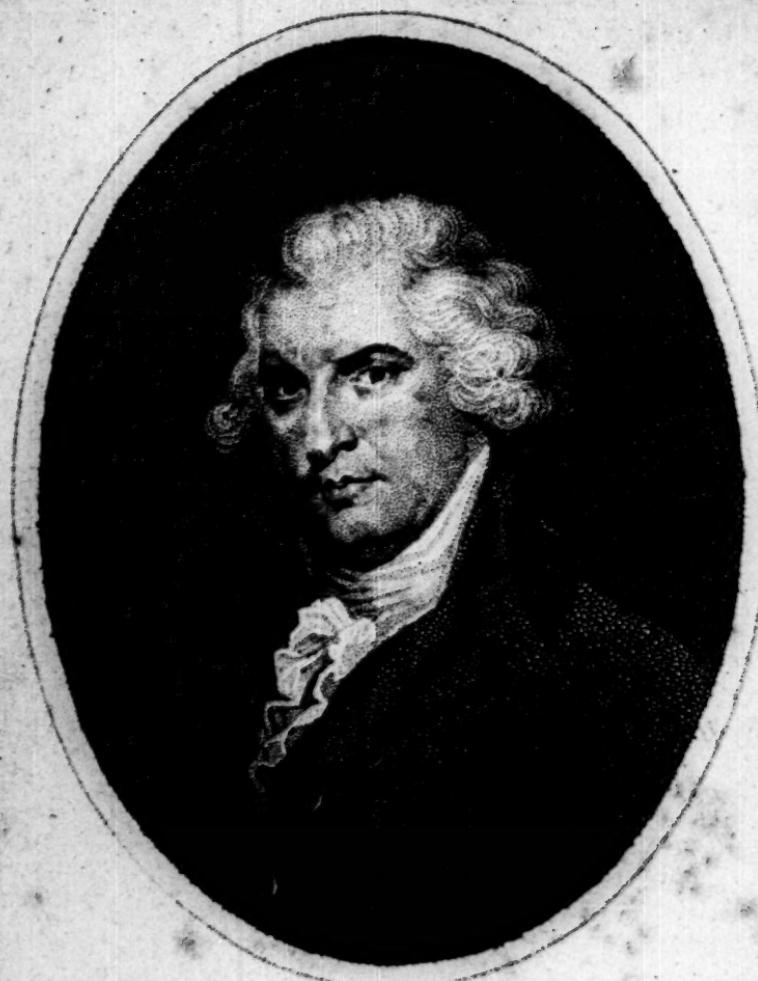


R·B·SHERIDAN ESQR

Drury Lane Theatre

Published Dec^r. 27, 1795. by B. Crosby, Stationers Court, Ludgate Street.



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**CROSBY's POCKET
COMPANION
TO THE
PLAYHOUSES.
BEING
THE LIVES
OF ALL THE PRINCIPAL
LONDON PERFORMERS.**

To be re-printed at the Commencement of each Winter
Season, with the Addition of those New Performers,
who may hereafter be engaged in the

**THEATRES
OF
Drury-Lane, Covent-Garden, and the Haymarket.
To which are subjoined,
PARTICULARS OF THE LIFE OF
MR. DIBDIN.**

DEDICATED TO
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, Esq.

**London:
PRINTED FOR B. CROSBY,
NO. 4, STATIONERS-COURT, LUDGATE-STREET.**

1796.



MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO
R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.

SIR,

AT the very period when your political conduct appears to attract the notice and admiration of every true friend of liberty, and when your exertions are entirely devoted to the glorious object of national benefit, it will, perhaps seem ill-timed to prefix your name to a publication that does not relate to politics. I confess, at the time when the political hemisphere is darkened, and loweringly predicts an approaching storm, and when you, Sir, are busily employed in the endeavour to avert the threatened danger, that another person, less importantly engaged, and whose mind could more easily bend to the perusal of this little Volume might have been found. But in casting my eyes towards the eminent and literary characters of the country, upon whom could I fix with so much propriety, on the present occasion, as the one I have chosen, for who has administered by

his pen so much to the support of, or added half so many graces to the English drama?

Pardon, therefore, Sir, this attempt to divert your mind, even for a moment, at this alarming crisis, from objects of much greater importance, than can possibly be in my power to offer; and being persuaded that this is not the period to present you with a long Dedication; but that to make it concise is the only chance it has now of being acceptable, I shall immediately conclude, by subscribing myself,

With the greatest Respect,

Your most obedient,

and very humble Servant,

THE EDITOR.

Jan. 9, 1795.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE chief object of the Editor of the following little volume, has been to insert all those prominent and material facts, to be found in the lives of our principal Performers that were likely to afford entertainment to the Reader, omitting those many repetitions of reflections, and that sameness of observation, which have hitherto swol-len similar publications to an inconvenient size, and bearing a price of which great complaint has been made.

The relation of entertaining facts, and those the best authenticated, has been the only wish of the Editor ; but although in most instances he has fully accomplished the object of his wishes, yet in a few others he has been compelled to men-tion several circumstances with caution, which bore the semblance of dubiosity.

The omission, no doubt, will be observed by the Reader, of some Performers, whose rank in the profession entitles them to a place in this Work ; but the Editor not having in his possession such materials upon which he could rely, he was de-
termined

terminated to omit them entirely, rather than sully his pages with wilful misrepresentation, trusting that in the next Edition he shall be able to give them an insertion, without the smallest apprehension of deceiving the Public, by dressing falsehood in the garb of truth.

It is the Editor's intention, at the commencement of each Winter, to add all those new Performers who may hereafter belong to the London Theatres. Such who are already engaged, and who perhaps, in some few instances, find themselves mis-stated, (which may be the case whatever caution has been used to prevent it) are requested to point out the errors, in a letter directed to the Publisher, and care shall be taken in the next impression to avoid them. All those also who are omitted for the present in this Work, but who may possess proper claims to a place in its future edition, are desired to send, as above, particulars of their lives, in order to prevent the distortion of facts, and the public being misinformed, and due attention shall be paid to them.

Jan. 10th, 1796.

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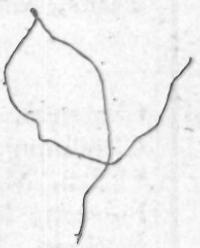
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CROSBY's
POCKET COMPANION
TO THE
PLAYHOUSES.

Drury-Lane Theatre.

MR. JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE.

THIS Gentleman, who has attracted so much attention in the Theatrical World, is the eldest son of a Mr. Roger Kemble, long time a manager of an itinerant company of players. He was intended for a Catholic Priest; and in order to have him early initiated into the necessary doctrines, his father placed him, when quite a child, at a Roman Catholic Academy then in Staffordshire. From that place he was removed, at a proper period, to an English College, at Douay, in France, for the purpose of qualifying him for his sacerdotal profession. In this situation, some trifling instances are related of Mr. Kemble's early proficiency in the Latin tongue; but as these were first put into circulation by the means of a sketch of his life, published soon after his first appearance in London, and generally con-

ceived to be from his own pen, we ought to affix to them as much veracity as to those things we hear uttered by a man when speaking of himself. About the age of twenty he returned to England, rather disgusted, as is supposed, with a College life, and shortly after joined his father's company, then performing at a place called Brecknock. His parent was highly offended at his leaving France, and for some time refused to administer the smallest alleviation to his distresses, which were then very considerable. Poverty and our hero were now almost inseparable; and, from the solicitations of his pressing companion, was at last induced to try his fortune on the stage. With this determination he made his first appearance at a place not far from Cheltenham. His success was by no means flattering, and the small pittance which attended it, was not by many degrees equal to his wants, which inclined him, as some say, to drinking; and from what has since been the bent of his inclinations, we may reasonably suppose that some truth is attached to the assertion.

For many years he experienced all the lamentable vicissitudes of a strolling life. At one time we find him joined with a Mr. Watson (now we believe Manager of the Cheltenham Theatre) to support an entertainment of a miscellaneous nature, consisting of *Lectures, tricks upon cards*, and various other objects of attraction. The lectures were given by Kemble, and with a degree of excellence that promised much. However, the profits arising from this undertaking were so very inconsiderable, that the Gentlemen were compelled to relinquish their scheme, and Kemble entered into a strolling company at Worcester; but here, being soon arrested by his taylor, who trusted him for a suit of cloaths some

time

time before, his sister, the present Mrs. Siddons, paid the debt, and liberated him from a jail. She soon after had him engaged in the company in which she performed; and from this period we may date the dawn of his future success. He was now particularly noticed by *Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester*, who did not hesitate to say, that our hero would in time arrive to great eminence in the profession. He tried his pen at a tragedy, and some other productions, but with very indifferent success. His growing fame as an actor rendered him an object to the managers, and Mr. Wilkinson, of the York theatre, engaged him. He soon became a great favourite in that city; and it is said that a young lady of some fortune, an inhabitant of the place, had resolved to marry him, but was prevented by the persuasion of her parents, an advice she was found not very reluctantly to follow, owing to the *non chalance* and apathy of the lover during the whole business. Mr. Wilkinson, who was also manager of the Edinburgh theatre, took Mr. Kemble to that place, in which he distinguished himself not only as an actor, but in the delivery of a *Lecture on Elocution*, which gained him many admirers. About the year 1782, the fame of his merit having reached Ireland, he was engaged by Daly, the Dublin manager, and in a short time was considered one of the greatest favorites that had ever appeared in that kingdom. He was particularly run after by the students, and they uniformly supported him on his benefit nights. It is but reasonable to think that his renown was by this time well known in London, and public curiosity was raised to a very high pitch to have a sight of this supposed theatrical prodigy. He was consequently engaged at one of our theatres (Drury-Lane) and *Hamlet* was fixed for his *debut*. His success, it

must be confessed, was great, but the critics were divided as to many points in his acting. Many praised him in terms little inferior to those applied to the English Roscius, and some considered him as a man of genius and discernment, but with such insurmountable natural imperfections, that would for ever preclude him from enjoying a place among our first performers. This latter opinion certainly carries with it a degree of good sense, that cannot but be apparent to every real judge of good acting. He has however gained an eminence in the Dramatic World, that no actor has been able to reach since the death of Mr. Henderson. We confine this assertion merely to his exertions in tragedy, for in those in comedy we cannot have the hardihood even to mention him.

Mr. Kemble, since his establishment in London, has made several attempts at writing for the stage. In his first, a farce called *The Projects*, he was very unfortunate, the piece not having been permitted to be heard throughout, the night it was brought forward. He has however been more successful since that time, and his *Lodoiska*, in particular, is much admired by the Town, owing, probably, more to the beauty of the music, and the uncommon splendor of the scenery, than, perhaps, to any intrinsic literary merit in the production itself.

In the year 1787 he was induced to make an offer of his hand to Mrs. Brereton, widow of the actor. His immediate entrance into the marriage-state, it is said, was recommended to him by the late Earl of Guildford, who had some apprehension of an alliance of the same kind taking place between his daughter and the present object of our enquiry. Three thousand pounds, report says, were proffered him on condition of his fixing upon some lady; and the one we have mentioned

mentioned was the first object of his attention. She did not long remain cruel, or bear a *ten years* siege, like that of Troy, but capitulated, on honourable terms, in little more than *ten days*.

Mr. Kemble, the year after his marriage, was appointed deputy manager of the theatre to which he belonged. This situation he filled until lately, a Mr. Grubb (who has also a share in the property) having succeeded him.

We shall not enter into an investigation of the professional merits of Mr. Kemble, or, indeed, of any other performer we may hereafter mention in the course of this work, it having been repeatedly done before, but confine ourselves, during our progress, entirely to the relation of the most prominent facts in the lives of each, without tiring our Readers with a continual similarity of reflection, and identity of expressions, so often to be met with in publications of this description.

MR. KING.

MR. KING is descended from a very respectable family, and has had an academical education. He was intended for the law, but possessing a sprightly turn of mind, and rather a fondness for a gay life, he soon, as may reasonably be supposed, became disgusted with the profession. The stage soon offered itself, as most congenial to his inclinations, and, accompanied by the famous Shuter, he at once entered

into a strolling company of comedians. For many years our hero suffered all the usual concomitant miseries of such a line of life. He, however, at last experienced an alleviation of his distresses, in consequence of getting an engagement at the Bath theatre. Here he lived with a Miss Baker, who he has since married, and during his stay in that city was much caressed. Mrs. Abington, at that time Miss Barton, also engaged much of the public attention, and she performed with Mr. King many of the leading characters in comedy. In a short time he was engaged at Drury-Lane at a very trifling salary, and his success in London was so inferior to his expectation, that after his engagement expired, he immediately repaired to Ireland, and enlisted himself under the banners of Mr. Sheridan. He there had a full opportunity of displaying the natural bent of his genius, and in sprightly comedy he soon became one of the greatest favorites that ever visited the metropolis of that kingdom. A dispute arising among the performers and manager, Mr. King, after some years stay in Ireland, was induced to return to London; and Mr. Garrick, always entertaining the highest opinion of his talents, immediately engaged him. His first appearance, on his return, was in the part of *Tom*, in the *Conscious Lovers*, and being a character suitable to his abilities (for all such were withheld from him when in London before) he at once burst forth with all the splendor of a first-rate comedian. He now regularly went through all those parts which he has since kept possession of, excepting those he has been compelled by age of late to give up. His *Lord Ogleby* has been long considered as one of the first performances that ever graced the English stage.

In

In the year 1769, Mr. King purchased a share of the Bristol theatre ; and under his management, conjointly with Mr. Palmer (the well-known projector of the present method of conveying the mails throughout England) the profits were very considerable. He afterwards became a proprietor of Sadlers-Wells, which he held for many years, but which was not very productive. He parted with his share to the present Mr. Wroughton, of Drury-Lane theatre. Every year appeared now to add to his reputation as an actor ; and when Mr. Sheridan found that politics would probably engross much of his time, he thought proper to appoint Mr. King acting manager, and thereby ease himself of a considerable load of business. This situation our hero filled with great credit to himself and satisfaction to the company. His fortune was now augmented very considerably, and the prospects of his remaining life bore the most pleasing aspect, when the whole atmosphere of his expectations was all of a sudden darkened, and changed from the most enlivening sunshine to gloom and melancholy. This unfortunate reverse was occasioned by a return of that practice which he was well known to be too fond of in the early part of his life, but which it was thought he had entirely abandoned. We allude to gaming, a vice that frequently absorbs all sentiments of honor and virtue, and which often brings the practiser's mind to contemplate suicide as the only act that can effectually relieve it from its load of misery. Mr. King, it is said, lost at one sitting the bulk of his whole fortune, a loss that compelled him to give up an intention which he had of purchasing some shares in Drury-Lane house. In a short time he resigned his situation of manager and actor ; and, as if wishing to leave for a time the place

in which he had acted so incautiously, immediately repaired to Ireland, and had as it were, at the evening of life, to begin the world again. The Dublin audience received their old favorite with the most enthusiastic approbation. On his return to London he was engaged by Mr. Harris, to perform a certain number of nights at Covent-Garden, and his name brought money into the Treasury. He has since been reinstated in his old situation at Drury-Lane, which he now holds, and will probably do so as long as his strength will permit him to do the necessary duty attached to it.

MR. J. PALMER.

THE origin of this Gentleman was very low indeed. His father was a common soldier, who intended his son for the same line of life. He was however enamoured of the stage; and, after some difficulty, (owing to the general conceived opinion of his want of abilities, particularly by Mr. Garrick) got a trifling engagement, which he held but a short time, and was discharged, being thought of no service to the theatre. Mr. Foote, who at that time opened the Haymarke-theatre with what he called *Morning Lectures*, engaged our hero to perform a character in a new piece of his, entitled *The Orators*. The manager had no mean opinion of our young adventurer's dramatic attempts, and kept him until the close of the season. He then made application to Mr. Garrick for an engagement, but in vain, and was compelled

compelled to enter a strolling company. From this situation however he was taken, by an unexpected offer from Mr. Garrick of an engagement, at a salary of one pound per week. His cast of parts, however, were contemptible in the extreme, the Officer in Richard III. being the principal character he was entrusted with. The next season he was dismissed, when he repaired to Colchester, and was glad to accept of fifteen shillings per week, which were afterwards increased to one guinea. He began by this time to improve in the profession, and the Norwich manager was glad to engage him at an addition of half a guinea to his salary. It was in this city that he got acquainted with a Miss Burrough, whom he afterwards married. The lady was in the expectation of receiving a very handsome fortune, but which was kept from her in consequence of her marriage, and the whole of the property was given to another. Mr. Palmer, it is said, much mortified at this disappointment, quitted his wife, and for some time lived with a former favorite. He however saw his error, and returned to his lawful spouse. Not wishing to remain in Norwich, where his conduct was rather severely censured, he came with her to London; and, after applying in vain to Mr. Garrick for an engagement, determined upon delivering *Stevens's Lecture upon Heads* in the country. In most of the towns he visited he was received with considerable applause, which was attended by what he admired full as well, namely, emolument.Flushed with success, he again visited London, when it was thought he would be a good second to Mr. Barry, who was then to make his appearance at the Haymarket theatre in his favorite part of *Othello*. Palmer however, at first, was found inadequate to the situation intended for him. This, it was supposed,

supposed, stimulated him to those means by which he could improve his powers, and before the close of the season he was much noticed by the Irish Roscius, who had a short time before come from Dublin, where he was manager of one of the theatres.

Mr. Garrick now began to alter his opinion of Mr. Palmer's theatrical talents, and offered him a situation in Old Drury more advantageous than his former one. This advantage, as to salary, extended only to twenty-five shillings; and with that pittance he continued for a long time, filling the most trifling characters, such as *Servants*, *Porters*, and *dumb Attendants* on monarchs. A lucky accident, however, served to bring him forward. One of the performers, of the same name, though no way related, a considerable favorite, was taken suddenly ill, and the part which he was advertised to play, was undertaken at so short a notice by Palmer, that the manager thought he would never be able to learn it in time. In this, however, he was greatly mistaken, for our hero performed it with all the correctness of a person long used to the character. Garrick then immediately articled him for four years, at two pounds per week, with an addition for the two last years. Mrs. Palmer (a lady who, at one time of her life, had very little idea of ever becoming an actress) was also engaged at one pound per week.

In the Spring, Palmer went down to Liverpool, and there played with considerable success. His amours were now much talked of; and it must be confessed, that few men in his situation have been so much admired by the ladies. In London he progressively continued improving, and always performed there in the Winter seasons, and in the Summer occasionally

occasionally played at *Liverpool, Dublin, Birmingham*, and various other places. He became at last so great a favorite in London, that the manager of the Summer theatre, in the Haymarket, engaged him for a constancy to perform there at the close of the Winter houses. Soon after this period, he received a blow from the famous Mrs. Barry (now the neglected Crawford) while she was performing the *Grecian Daughter*, that had nearly proved fatal. The spring of the dagger with which she struck him did not play, and the blade, instead of burying itself in the handle, stood firm, and thus *Dionysius*, performed by Palmer, received the whole force of the stroke. This accident confined him to his room for near six months, but recovering his usual strength and health, he reassumed his former station at Drury-Lane.

In the year 1785, he was induced, by the pressing solicitations of the late unfortunate Mr. Jackson, who was tried for high treason in Ireland, to build a playhouse near Wellclose-Square, under the sanction of the Governor of the Tower, who it was supposed had such a right invested in him, within his district. Two years after, the theatre opened, and being much frequented by the people in that part of the metropolis, the undertaking became an object of opposition to the Winter managers, who conceived it an infringement of their rights, and an invasion of their property. How far they were just in this opinion, we will not pretend to say, as various and many arguments have been already advanced on that subject. Palmer, finding he was thus frustrated in his intention of performing regular dramas, immediately brought forward entertainments of singing, dancing, &c. similar to those introduced at *Sadler's Wells, Ashley's, and the Circus*. The opposition, however, against

him

him in this attempt also became so very formidable, that he was at last compelled to yield, and shut up the house. His embarrassments, always excessive, by this failure were considerably worse, and he was at length forced to take up his abode in the King's Bench prison. His creditors were certainly lenient to him ; for they made an offer of setting him at liberty, and giving him five hundred pounds a year, provided he would consign the remainder of his income to trustees for the purpose of discharging his debts. This liberal proposal was not then acceded to on the part of the debtor. He has, however, since (after being liberated from confinement, and taking a trip to Scotland and other places) been restored to his former situation in Drury-Lane, and is now uninterruptedly pursuing his profession with the permission of his creditors, as we believe part of his salary is appropriated, as before intended, to their use, to continue until the whole of his debts are liquidated.

MR. BENSLEY.

MR. BENSLEY, it is generally supposed, embraced a military life, before he had any ideas of the Stage—This was not the case, as we find him at a very early period in a strolling company in the country. In that situation he displayed but slender claims to notice, even where so little was wanting to attract attention ; and he was afterwards persuaded by his friends to accept a commission in the army, and his duty

duty called him to America. There his inclination for the drama was still apparent, as he induced the officers to perform several plays, in which he was considered the hero of the military company. A peace having taken place between the belligerent powers, Mr. Bensley returned to this country, and, by interest alone, obtained a situation under Mr. Garrick.

In 1765 he made his first appearance in London, in the part he has since held with so much reputation to himself, namely *Pierre*. His performance then was however very moderate; and the applause he met with, was principally owing to the liberal and generous support he received from a large body of his brother officers who composed part of the audience. As the seasons advanced, he by no means increased in fame, and in this kind of stationary reputation he remained until he enlisted under the banners of the late Mr. Colman and Mr. Powell, Patentees of Covent Garden Theatre. The advantage that Mr. Bensley had in playing second parts to Mr. Powell was very considerable, and by a proper attention to the necessary studies of his profession, he now began to make a most respectable figure on the stage. Powell soon after dying, together with Mr. Holland at the same Theatre, made a great opening for our hero; and he took proper care to make the most of the advantage.

Here he remained increasing his reputation as an actor, but more perhaps as a man of sense, and judgment. In the midst of his career, we find him fast enthralled in the snares of Cupid; and the object of his adoration was that beautiful, grinning beauty, the present *Mrs. Mattocks*. The Lady, it is said, melted into compliance; and the lovely pair enjoyed a reciprocity of temporary happiness.

Some years ago Mr. Bensley returned to Old Drury, and he has from that time remained there maintaining a high rank as a performer, and possessing the confidence and friendship of a very respectable and numerous acquaintance in private life.

MR. BANNISTER, JUN.

THIS great and deserved favorite of the town is the son of Mr. C. Bannister, the well-known vocal performer. He was tolerably well educated, and intended for the profession of a painter—His mind, however, did not incline this way, and having many opportunities of visiting the theatres, through the interest of his father, he soon imbibed a partiality for the histrionic art. His first appearance on the boards was in the character of the *Apprentice*, at the Hay-Market Theatre. His success could not have been inconsiderable, as it was the cause of his obtaining an engagement at Drury Lane. Mr. Garrick had some ideas of our hero's tragic powers, and gave him the part of *Zaphna*, in *Mahomet*, to perform. The Manager took considerable pains in instructing the young actor in the delineation of this arduous character, and completely succeeded in his endeavours. The writer of this sketch was present at this first attempt of Mr. Bannister in tragedy; and he cannot refrain from declaring, that it was much the best piece of tragic acting of that gentleman ever since. Mr. Garrick, it is said, was very fanguine

sanguine in his expectations of what he would in time arrive at in the walks of Melpomene. This great judge, however, was here in error, for Mr. Bannister's forte is certainly in comedy.

He continued, however, the buskin hero for some seasons, performing *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, and most of the principal parts in tragedy. Still he found his reputation did not increase equal to his wishes, and he was determined to try comedy. In a short time he found himself in his element, as it were, and soon began to engross much of the public favour and attention. Numerous were the characters he sustained, and most of them with equal ability. He now became well known upon the town as a gay sprightly companion ; and the great flow of his spirits occasionally hurried him into all the extravagance and dissipation of this extensive metropolis. In order effectually to cure him of these excesses, it was thought by his friends that the best way would be to get him married. Miss Harper, then a singer at Covent-Garden, was mentioned as a proper object, and in a short time he became so enamoured of her, that he offered her his hand ; and the Lady having entertained a partiality for him, did not long hesitate in accepting it. They have now been married some years, and a more domestic happy couple perhaps it would be difficult to find.

In his professional pursuits he has risen to an eminence of popularity, superior, we may say, to any other actor living. His fortune is no doubt very considerable ; and from his well-known prudence and economy in his private concerns, we may reasonably suppose he will in time become an opulent, and, we are certain, a most respectable and worthy member of society.

MR. WROUGHTON.

THIS Gentleman was regularly bred a surgeon at Bath, where, being tired of his profession, he made a trial of his talents on the stage. However inconsiderable his success might have been, it was not such as to dishearten him from pursuing the line to which his inclination led him ; and with an intent of making his public appearance in London as an actor, he immediately left that city. By this time having received the most indubitable proofs of the affection of an amiable young lady, he married her, and soon after made his first appearance in London in the character of *Altamont*, in the *Fair Penitent*. His reception was by no means equal to his expectations, or to those of his friends. He, however, obtained an engagement at Covent-Garden, and having no other person at that time standing in the way of his line of acting, he came into the possession of the first parts ; and the town being at last reconciled to his defects, his exertions were highly applauded.

On the death of that inimitable performer Mr. Henderson, there was a great dearth of theatrical merit at this theatre ; and Mr. Harris, ever active to make up a deficiency of that or any other kind, engaged Messrs. Pope and Holman, two gentlemen of great promise in the profession. These engrossed most, if not all, of the principal characters in tragedy ; and Mr. Wroughton finding himself of but little service, resigned his situation.

He now had more time to attend to the business of Sadler's Wells, which he purchased some time before of Mr. King ; but finding this concern by no means so profitable as to make him consider an engagement which was offered him at Drury-Lane as unworthy of notice, he entered into that company in the year 1788, at the very handsome salary of twelve pounds per week. This situation he has held ever since ; but we understand his intentions are to retire in a short time entirely from the stage, having realized a handsome sufficiency for himself and family.

MR. BARRYMORE.

MR. BARRYMORE, whose real name is *Blewitt*, was, it is said, intended for his father's business, a *bairdresser*, who we believe is living at this time at *Taunton*, in Somersetshire. The son, however, overturned all his father's intentions respecting him ; for, possessing a passion for the stage, he entered a strolling company. For a long time he continued in this pitiable situation, experiencing all its poverty and wretchedness. The late Mr. Colman, by accident, at last saw him perform in the country, and thinking rather favorable of his powers, engaged him for the Hay-Market Theatre. He was then thought to be an object as a singer : but in this Mr. Colman and others were entirely mistaken : for after trying him in several singing parts, he made such little impression on the audience, that the above

gentleman was glad to pay him a sum of money in lieu of the engagement. His ill success one might have supposed would have effectually destroyed all chance of his obtaining another engagement in London; but it turned out otherwise, for he soon after got a situation in Drury-Lane Theatre: and altho' he failed before as a singer, still they brought him out again in that line; and his former reception attended him. It was, however, supposed that he could have been made of service in the theatre, and for a number of seasons he appeared occasionally in tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce. His improvement as he went on was evident to the town, and being placed in a more respectable cast of parts than he before possessed, in consequence of the late Mr. Farren leaving Drury-Lane Theatre, and going to Covent-Garden, he now began to grow into favor. During Mr. Palmer's absence from the company at the time he was employed in the management of the Royalty Theatre, Mr. Barrymore was put into all his characters; and considering he had to combat the favorable impression made on the town by his predecessor, he certainly stood his ground respectably.. Many of those he has been compelled to give up since Mr. Palmer's return; but he still holds a high rank in the theatre, and appears of late to have shewn more genius and nicely of discrimination in several tragic parts, than he was supposed to have been equal to.

He is married to the daughter of an oilman who lives in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury, and we understand demean's himself in private life with the utmost propriety and decorum.

MR. C. KEMBLE.

WE confess ourselves by no means sufficiently prepared to enter at large into this gentleman's memoirs. The necessary materials concerning them, which we were in expectation of receiving, not having arrived in time, we are compelled to give our readers what particulars we are acquainted with, and those not bearing the marks of so much authenticity as we flatter ourselves are to be found in most parts of this volume, we shall of course confine them within a narrow compass.

Mr. C. Kemble is the younger brother of Mr. J. Kemble of the same theatre. He received an academical education at Wandsworth, during which time he frequently discovered a considerable inclination for repeating various passages out of some of our distinguished dramatic authors. However, whether his relations did not entertain any great hope of his powers in that way, or from what other reason we know not, his mind was directed to a different pursuit, and through the interest of his family he was placed in a comfortable situation in the General Post-office. Here we understand he remained but a short time, and still feeling a strong predilection for the stage, he determined to pursue a line in which his inclinations led him to think he could not fail of success. With this intention he repaired to the country, and we believe performed for the first time at Newcastle, in his brother S. Kemble's theatre. His success was reported in town to have been

highly

highly flattering ; and he afterwards played at various other provincial theatres with equal approbation. Thus flushed with his reception he returned to the metropolis, and shortly after made his public appearance ; but expectation having been raised much higher than his abilities could support, the town in consequence experienced a disappointment. He has, however, since that period, particularly last summer, at Colman's house, displayed considerable powers ; and in a few instances this winter, we have discovered evident proofs of genius in his acting, which we did not before think him master of.

MR. SUETT.

MR. SUETT's father was bred a butcher, but having been rather unsuccessful in trade, he obtained the situation in St. Paul's Cathedral of shewing that stupendous edifice to the curious. The son was never bred to any particular line of life ; and the stage, which is often the ultimatum of those in desperate states, offered itself as the most eligible way of obtaining the means of subsistence. With this conviction on his mind, he immediately joined a strolling company in the country. His success was great, particularly as a singer ; and Mr. Wilkinson, of the York theatre, engaged him. Here he became a considerable favorite, and was much esteemed as a man in private life.

Wilkinson,

Wilkinson, who was at that time also manager of the Edinburgh theatre, took him to that city, where he performed with equal success. At various times he visited the principal cities and towns in the country, and distinguished himself in his profession in most of them. In Liverpool he married Miss West, a dancer, and soon after made the best of his way to London. The Manager of Drury-Lane engaged him, and he made his appearance in the character of *Ralph*, in the *Maid of the Mill*, but with very moderate share of applause. He has, however, since greatly increased in the public favor; and the death of that incomparable comedian, *Parsons*, left a fine opening for some actor of merit to fill up, and Mr. Suett was thought by the Managers the most eligible person for the undertaking. By industry and great attention, he has certainly rendered himself a most excellent substitute for his imitable predecessor.

MR. DODD.

THIS theatrical veteran has been on the stage since the age of sixteen. His first attempt was made in the part of *Roderigo* in an itinerant company at Sheffield; and it is said that his endeavours were crowned with the most flattering success. He was engaged afterwards in Norwich, and there became the tragedy hero, as well as the sprightly useful performer in comedy. He had at that time a strong inclination for the buskin; and it was a long period before he could be persuaded

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ed that his talents were not bent that way. He next went to Bath, where he confined himself to the performance of sprightly comedy alone, as the only line in which he was at last convinced he would ever excel. His fame now began to spread, and it may be supposed soon reached the ears of Mr. Garrick, who engaged him at Drury-Lane in the year 1763. His first part in London was *Faddle*, in the *Foundling*, and every person present seemed delighted with his powers. Roscius saw at once his forte, and confined him principally to the delineation of the coxcombs of fashion, in which he has always stood unrivalled. The famous Mrs. Bulkely lived with him a considerable time; but some cause of an unpleasant nature is said to have occasioned a separation.

Mr. Dodd has since that time retained his rank in the theatre; but frequent indisposition, joined with age, will, we are fearful, soon deprive the stage of this very valuable actor.

MR. WATHEN.

MR. WATHEN was born in London, and is the son of the late Dr. Wathen, of Lincoln's-Inn Fields. Being captivated in his youth with a cockade, and the glare of a red coat, he determined to embrace a military life, in which station his activity in the performance of his duty, soon made him much noticed by his superior officers; and the conviviality and sociable qualities of the man in private, made his company coveted by every person that knew him.

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At the memorable siege of Gibraltar we find him raised to a lieutenancy in the 39th regiment ; and during the whole of that extraordinary defence, which has added so many additional laurels to the arms of Great-Britain, Lieutenant Wa-then displayed the most distinguished intrepidity, and had the honour of receiving several marks of particular attention from the late illustrious Governor of the place. At the glorious termination of the siege, the Lieutenant found very little difficulty in obtaining a company ; and he afterwards went with his regiment (the 14th) to Jamaica. At the close of the war, he sold out with the brevet rank of major.

During the whole of his military career, he frequently discovered very considerable theatrical abilities ; and when he returned to his native country, became the Roscius of many private theatres, and jointly performed with the late Lord Barrymore, for a long time with the greatest applause. This success in the dramatic line induced him at last to hire the Richmond playhouse, in which he acted most of the principal comic characters with so much reputation, that after going over to Ireland, and performing in Dublin under the feigned name of *George*, he returned to London and engaged himself with Mr. Colman, determined for the future to pursue the profession as an object of interest as well as that of pleasure. His reception at the Hay-Market was very flattering, and he soon rendered himself highly useful in the company. The Managers of Drury Lane finding his comic powers might turn out of essential service to their house, offered him an engagement ; and he is at present considered by the town a most excellent second to Bannister, jun., and in some characters we think him very little inferior to that inimitable comedian.

MR. MOODY.

THIS actor was born at Cork, where his father lived in the occupation of a hairdresser, which business the present subject of our memoirs was reared to. His first appearance as an actor was at Kingston, in Jamaica, where he was the tragedy hero for a long time. He appeared to think this line of acting the best suited to his abilities; and when he came to this country, he applied to the Managers of Drury-Lane for an engagement. The buskin was uppermost in his mind, and he offered himself as a tragedian. At first he played many tragic parts; but it was found he had not much talent that way. His forte was evidently in portraying the Irish characters; and in those, it must be confessed, he stands unrivalled. *Captain O'Cutter* was the first part of the kind he was taken notice of, and his inimitable performance of it served in a great measure to assist the run of the comedy, the *Jealous Wife*. *Major O'Flaherty* was the next part of consequence in which he was admired; and the town became delighted with his manner of delineating characters, which until his time was hardly known on the stage. He has ever since kept his ground in the theatre; and we understand, owing to the strict frugality of his private conduct, he has amassed a very handsome independent fortune.

MR. AICKIN. 3M

MR. AICKIN was born in Ireland, and intended for the business of a weaver. This line of life, however, did not suit his inclinations; and before he came to the age of manhood, we find him filling the situation of a player in that kingdom. After having sufficiently convinced himself that he had not mistaken his talents, he immediately embarked for Scotland, and in a short time became a great favourite in Edinburgh. He continued there until a quarrel arising between him and another actor respecting the performance of a character, in which dispute the town took so decisive a part against Mr. Aickin, that he was under the necessity of quitting the place in order to save his life. He made the best of his way up to London, and obtained an engagement at Drury-Lane Theatre, where he has remained ever since. He generally plays at Colman's. He is certainly a very useful actor, and deserves the reputation he enjoys.

MR. WHITFIELD.

MR. WHITFIELD was a common servant to the celebrated Powell ; and it is probable that a wish to imitate his master made him first think of the stage. On the death of Mr. Powell, he soon repaired to the country, with an intention of trying his powers on some public theatre. His success was very moderate ; and for many seasons he strolled about various parts of England with different companies of comedians. At last he obtained an engagement at Norwich, where he gained great credit as an actor, and was considered one of their greatest favorites. Looking, however, up to London as the only theatrical market where he was certain of receiving the full value of his talents, whatever they might be, he visited that city, and made his public entré in the humble part of *Trueman*, in *George Barnwell*. He has since that period rose to the possession of better characters ; and at Drury-Lane is considered a very useful second-rate performer.

MR. BANNISTER, SEN.

THE first place we find this gentleman's name as an actor was at Deptford, where his father lived in possession of a place in the Victualling-office. He commenced at a very early period a *bushy* hero, performing *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, *Richard III.* and most of the principal parts in tragedy.Flushed with the success he met with, he applied to Mr. Garrick for employment, but in vain. He then repaired to Norwich, and for many years enjoyed there a considerable share of public favor. Afterwards he got an engagement at the Hay-Market, and was brought out by Foote the same night that Mr. J. Palmer first appeared in the Orators. He was much noticed in his *Imitations*, in which he was considered unrivalled. He took off the famous singers *Tenducci* and *Champness*; and Giardini, the musician, declared to Garrick, that he thought Mr. Bannister possessed one of the finest voices he ever heard. His musical fame now began to be generally known, and he was engaged for *Ranelagh* and *Marybone Gardens*. He used to sing night about at each place, and was highly admired at both. Mr. Garrick wishing much to have the assistance of a man so fast increasing in reputation, offered him a situation at Drury-Lane, where he appeared for the first time in the character of *Merlin*, in *Cymon*. His success was very great, and he continued gaining upon the favor of the town for a long time. In the summer he used to perform at the Hay-Market, and there signalized himself in many

parts in which his singing was not necessary. For several years after this he ranked high as a comedian, as well as a vocal performer; and in the year 1782, having some difference with the Managers of Drury-Lane, respecting an increase of salary, he went over to Covent-Garden, and there remained until 1785, at which time he returned to his old theatre, where he continued until the opening of the Royalty by Palmer, in the year 1787 and 1788. He became at this new undertaking one of its greatest supporters, and remained there until that theatre was compelled to be closed, in consequence of the opposition that was made to it by the Winter Managers, particulars of which were mentioned in Mr. Palmer's life. Thus situated, Mr. Bannister, not wishing to make overtures for an engagement either to Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden, the first of which he quitted rather abruptly when he went to the Royalty, repaired to the country, and performed at several of the provincial theatres, and with that success to which his merit entitled him. Still, however, he did not think a strolling life very pleasing, or reputable. He therefore returned to London, and obtained a situation at the Hay-Market, and afterwards at Covent-Garden. He is now, engaged at his old house, Drury-Lane, and is likely to remain there as long as his theatrical powers will continue.

MR. R. PALMER.

WE refer the reader to our account of Mr. J. Palmer's family, as affording sufficient information respecting that of his brother now before us. Mr. R. Palmer's first attempt on the stage was at the Summer Theatre; and he afterwards got a trifling engagement at Drury-Lane, where he remained performing whatever parts were given him, and became more a useful actor, than one that displayed much shining talent. His friends perceiving that a fondness for gaiety and pleasure had hurried him into extravagant excesses, recommended him to marry, as by that means they thought when once his home was made attractive by the presence of a woman that he loved, his attention would be diverted from dissipation and the follies of the town. In the midst of this consideration he met with a *Miss Cooper*, the daughter of a tradesman, and in a short time a mutual affection resulting from their acquaintance, they were married, and, we understand, have enjoyed ever since a considerable share of domestic happiness.

On the secession of his brother from Drury-Lane, at the time the Royalty opened, he succeeded him in the performance of *Joseph Surface*, and other characters, in all of which he displayed more ability than the town thought he possessed. From that period, a few times excepted, he has held a respectable place at Drury-Lane. He appears to give more general satisfaction in the *Fops* than in any other description of character.

MR. KELLY.

MR KELLY is a native of Dublin, in which city his father has considerably distinguished himself in the occupation of a dancing-master. At a very early period of life young Kelly shewed a strong propensity for music ; and it is said, that after being instructed by the son of the famous *Arne*, he sung at some of the first private concerts in the above city with considerable applause. A company of Italians having arrived there, his father was persuaded (or rather not knowing what to do better for his son) to permit him to publicly appear with them ; and the boy gaining considerable credit as a vocal performer, it was thought advisable to turn his mind to this line of life ; and in order to have him properly prepared for it, he was sent to a college at Naples, where a number of circumstances are said to have happened, all of them tending to prove the wonderful progress Mr. Kelly made in the science of music. These not being sufficiently authenticated, we cannot present them to our readers. We shall, therefore, merely add, that after having staid abroad for some years, during which time he belonged to several musical corps in various parts of Europe, he came over to this country, and in a short time appeared at Drury-Lane Theatre, in the part of *Lionel*, in which he was received with uncommon applause. He was soon considered the most finished vocal male performer on the English stage ; and a very handsome salary has fixed him

him in this country ever since. It is supposed that Mrs. Crouch has been greatly improved in her singing by the *kind* instructions of this gentleman ; and his *kindness*, report says, has led him to bestow *more favors* on the lady ; and she in return has not been *insensible* to his attentions. At present Mr. Kelly has no rival at the same theatre ; and we believe the musical department of the company is entirely under his management.

MR. SEDGWICK.

HAD it not been for this gentleman's fine voice, he would have probably remained in the occupation he was bred to, namely, that of an ironmonger. His talent of singing made him courted by most companies, and he soon belonged to a great number of musical societies, in which he was always particularly applauded ; and in that of the Anacreontic, he was actually the person appointed to sing the famous song of that name at every meeting. His reputation as a singer began to be very considerable among those private circles in which he moved ; and in the midst of his exertions to maintain the reputation he then possessed, he found that his mind was too much diverted from the necessary duties of business to make its profits in the least worthy his consideration. He therefore determined to quit trade entirely, and hazard his vocal powers publicly upon the stage. With this determination he applied to the Managers of Drury-Lane,

Lane, to gain permission to appear at their house, a requisition that was readily granted. He made his debut at that theatre in the year 1787 in the character of *Artabanes*, in *Artaxerxes*, and was received with such flattering approbation, that he thought himself entitled to a very handsome salary; which being refused, he went and performed at the Royalty Theatre, which at that time was open. He there played, or rather sung, with very considerable applause; but was very glad to return to Drury-Lane, and accept of the engagement he before refused, in consequence of not finding much punctuality in the payment of his salary at the other place.

He is generally admired as a very fine bass singer, but not thought much of as a performer.

MR.

MR. DIGNUM.

MR. DIGNUM was bred a taylor, a trade which his father followed for some time, but with very little advantage to himself or family. What to do with his chubby boy he did not know for some time. At last the youth was discovered to have a tolerable good voice ; and after having distinguished himself as a singer in a catholic chapel in Duke-street, he was recommended to Mr. Linley, lately deceased, and that gentleman being pleased with his voice, immediately took him as an apprentice. During the time he was thus bound, we believe he experienced many difficulties and distresses, which his parents were incapable of preventing. At last he made his appearance at Drury Lane in the part of *Young Meadows* ; and although his person did not prepossess the audience much in his favor, still his singing was greatly admired. He was soon engaged at a very handsome salary, and since that time appears to have fixt himself as one of our principal vocal performers. To do him that justice to which his conduct entitles him, he has behaved in the most affectionate manner to his parents since fortune has smiled upon him ; for he has of late almost entirely administered to their support. His power of affording pecuniary assistance to his parents was considerably encreased on his marrying, some years ago, the daughter of an attorney, with a very pretty fortune.

As a singer, he is certainly an object to any theatre, and at Drury-Lane proves a powerful assistant to the superior efforts of Mr. Kelly.

MR.

MR. BENSON.

THIS gentleman has rendered himself so useful in the profession, although with very moderate share of talents, that he certainly deservedly fills the situation he enjoys at present. What he was intended for we know not; but we find him many years back strolling in the country in several itinerant companies. As he approached the metropolis, he displayed his dramatic powers at Windsor, and was there considered the Roscius of the place. But still his profits were by no means equal to his wishes; and having married a Miss Satchell, the sister of Mrs. S. Kemble, he thought that through the interest of the Kemble family he would be able to obtain an engagement in London. In this supposition he was ultimately right, although he had been long waiting in the expectation before he was so fortunate. In the summer he plays tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce, at Colman's. In fact, he is there a kind of *Jack of all trades*, useful in all, but great in none. His salary at Drury-Lane is but low, and it must be admitted, that he bustles through a great deal of business for it.

MR. PACKER.

MR. PACKER was bred a sadler, and followed the business for some time; but possessing a *p penchant* for the stage, he quitted that trade, and commenced actor. We find his name in the bills near fifty years ago, at the time Mr. Garrick was in the height of his popularity, by whom he was engaged to perform the second and third-rate characters in tragedy and comedy; and being always attentive to the business of the scene, and ever found perfect in his parts, he rendered himself a very useful member of the theatre. There has been very little novelty in the life of this Gentleman, so that we have not much to relate respecting him. He has continued, with but a few interruptions, at Drury-Lane for these many years past, performing the same cast of characters, although of late he has of course been compelled to give up all those in which a youthful appearance is necessary, in order to sustain them with propriety.

MR. WALDRON.

THIS Gentleman would, in all probability, have been obliged to quit the metropolis, but for the following fortunate circumstance. When Mr. Garrick and others were settling some important matters relative to the Theatrical

trical Fund, they wanted a person to take an active part in the management; and Waldron happening to pass in the moment of deliberation, Mr. Garrick proposed him, which was instantly assented to.

Mr. Waldron, although apparently old, has a warm heart. During his Summer excursions at Hammersmith, Windsor, &c. where he has often acted as manager of a troop, he became acquainted with Mrs. Harlowe, of Covent-Garden theatre, and was the means of procuring her the situation she now holds.

Mr. Waldron's line of acting is chiefly confined to *old men* in comedy. He imitates the manner of the late Shuter, but with such an overflow of colouring, grimace, and gesture, that in London, where there is much chaste, and excellent acting, it fails of its aim, and becomes disgusting; a disagreeable lisp, and forced tremor of voice, also lessens the little merit he possesses.

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH.

THIS Gentleman's family we confess ourselves unacquainted with. He was at a very early period recommended to the late Mr. Younger, who immediately took him under his protection, and brought him out when very young at Covent-Garden. He then went to Liverpool, where his patron was manager, and in a short time gained much in the favor of the town, and was considered one of their best low comedians. An accident, however, about this period, had very nearly

nearly put an end to his existence. Between the play and the farce, while he was looking through the aperture in the middle of the curtain, an apple with a knife stuck through it was thrown at him, which unfortunately entered so deeply near his eye, that he was confined to his bed for some time, with very little expectation of his recovery.

He afterwards performed in Edinburgh, York, Manchester, &c. &c. with increased reputation, and in the year 1788 got an engagement at Drury-Lane, which he has kept ever since ; and we think he possesses powers that entitle him to a more respectable rank in the theatre than he enjoys at present.

MR. BANKS.

THIS Gentleman is the son of Mr. Banks, formerly a respectable carver and gilder, in Fleet-Street, in which business, we believe, he intended to initiate his son. Whether from choice or derangement in circumstances, Mr. Banks, senior commenced Harlequin many years ago at Sadlers-Wells, and held that part for a considerable time with reputation ; it is no wonder then if his son, while a boy, was proud of imitating him in attitudes, leaps, and dumb shew.

Mr. Banks's first *debut* was at Liverpool, under the protection of Mr. Lee-Lewes, at the age of 16, where he met with great encouragement, and from whence Mr. Younger got him engaged at Manchester, where his chief employment was constructing the machinery requisite for the stage, such as beasts, shipping, &c. in which he is a real proficient.

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As a proof, the shipping at the King's Theatre, so universally admired in *The Pirates*, was entirely his own work.

After some few seasons at Liverpool and Manchester, he was invited to Edinburgh, where he established himself in the character of *Friday*, in *Robinson Crusoe*. Jackson, the manager, having got into arrears with him, and finding stratagem necessary to come to a settlement, he promised Mr. Jackson he would stay with him; but on getting his money, he went, in company with Mr. Grift, to visit a distressed actor in the Tolbooth, and remained till the coach was ready, when they immediately set out for London, where Mr. Palmer, of Bath, had requested our hero to meet him; but being disappointed of the situation Palmer had promised him, he wrote to his former employers at Liverpool, where he was engaged by them for several years as principal *barlequin, low comedian, scene painter, and machinist*.

He has a good taste and execution in scene painting, and in most of the companies to which he belonged has superintended that department.

Having had great encomiums passed on him by several of the London performers, he set out for the metropolis, where accidentally meeting Mr. John Kemble, was immediately engaged as principal harlequin, and assistant painter to Mr. Greenwood.

Mr. Banks was also employed, during the rebuilding of Drury-Lane, as scene-painter at Covent-Garden, under the direction of Mr. Hodgings.

MR. PHILLIMORE.

THIS Gentleman was born in London, and brought up originally to the business of a coach carver, which he, however, soon quitted for the stage. The city of Bristol had the honor of witnessing his first attempt ; and although his success was not of the first brilliancy, yet his personal appearance, and an industry which he practised at that time, rendered him of considerable service to the theatre, and recommended him to the favor of the manager, Mr. Quick, of whose friendship he still professes a grateful recollection.

He afterwards strolled through most parts of England ; and at last coming up to London, he was so fortunate as to gain a situation in Drury-Lane house. His person is his greatest recommendation in the trifling parts he assumes ; and since the first time of his appearance in the metropolis, he has never displayed any talent that could in the smallest degree entitle him to a higher walk in the drama.

He is said to have obtained his engagement at Drury-Lane theatre from the following ludicrous circumstance :—At the conclusion of the Bristol season, being desirous of visiting London, he found himself enabled, as he imagined, by success in play. He won a few guineas from a sea-officer at billiards ; and when the tar's cash was exhausted he played upon *tick*, until the sum he had lost amounted to twelve or fifteen pounds, for which he gave a draft on *Charles Stuart*, Esq. Banker at Charing-Cross, London, This our hero concluded

concluded would enable him to visit the capital in style ; and on the validity of his draft he expended all his ready cash, in buying cloaths, and journeying to London, where, much to his surprise, he could hear no tidings of the Banker, till after wandering a long time about Charing-Cross, he produced it to a man who had sagacity enough to perceive the trick, and who after ruminating, replied, “ *Charles Stuart! Charles Stuart!*—oh ! there he sits on horseback,”—pointing to the statue of Charles the First.—His misfortune reaching the ears of the managers, in pity to his disappointment and distress, they engaged him.

MRS. SIDDONS.

THIS inimitable actress is the daughter of a Mr. Roger Kemble, manager of a strolling company of comedians. She was born, we are informed, in Cheshire, and made very early attempts on the stage, in the capacity of a singer: her friends, however, soon found that this was not her forte, and directed her attention to the Tragic Muse. Miss Kemble became afterwards passionately enamoured of Mr. Siddons, at that time a strolling player; but being refused permission by her parents to marry him, it is said that she resigned her situation in her father's company, and gave up all idea of continuing in the profession. Not knowing what to turn her thoughts to, she hired herself as lady's-maid to a Mrs. Greathead, of Guy's Cliff, in Warwickshire, at ten guineas a year.

Mr. Siddons, however, did not let her long remain in this situation, but made her his wife, and they both joined a company at Chamberlain. Here they experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune; and although her talents were considered far above what is generally met with in the country, yet her professional exertions, for a long time, were not able to keep her but a very little above the level of want and penury. She was engaged afterwards at Liverpool, and here she began to emerge from former obscurity: her efforts were now attended with applause and a proportionable profit; and other principal towns concurring in the same sentiment respecting

specting her talents, she of course directed her attention towards London, and waited upon Mr. Garrick, in order to obtain his consent to play at his theatre. She performed Mrs. Strickland, and some other parts in comedy and tragedy, but her reception was so very inconsiderable, that the manager did not think it would answer his purpose to induce her to stay in his company. From thence she went to Bath, where, in a short time, she so much improved, that crowds of theatrical amateurs used to flock to see her. Mr. Garrick's judgment was called in question, for entertaining so poor an opinion of her abilities, as he did when she played with him. Her increase of fame was at last so great, that after performing at Bath for several seasons, with the most unbounded applause, she was particularly recommended, in the year 1782, by Mr. Whalley, the poet, to the managers of Drury-Lane. The English Roscius being no more, was now generally conceived to have been too precipitate in delivering his sentiments respecting her some years before; and public curiosity being raised to its utmost in London, to see this theatrical constellation of excellence, she made her appearance at Drury-Lane on the 10th of October, in the same year, in the character of *Isabella*. The success she met with was beyond all precedent, and her fame soon reverberated from one part of the kingdom to the other. Multitudes crowded to the theatre every night of her performance, and the Tragic Muse, who had been kept in the shade bewailing the death of her Garrick, was now brought forward by the wonderful powers of a Siddons, with undiminished energy and effect. In order to make her some recompence for the great increase and overflow which they found

found in the treasury, the managers very generously doubled her salary, and gave her an extra benefit.

One of Mrs. Siddons' sisters, Miss Frances Kemble, who had also been bred to the stage, now thought of taking advantage of her relative's fame and interest in London, and came up to the metropolis with an intention of pursuing her profession. She was soon announced in the bills to play *Alicia* to her sister's *Jane Shore*. Great expectations were formed of her, but they were all lost in disappointment. So far from displaying any thing great; her exertions were below mediocrity. She remained some short time on the stage, and afterwards married a Mr. Twiss, a gentleman of some literary abilities, with whom she retired.

Mrs. Siddons first benefit was, perhaps, the most productive that was ever known in the annals of the theatre. The gentlemen of the bar made a subscription among themselves, to the amount of one hundred guineas, which they presented to her, as a small acknowledgment for the pleasure her talents had afforded them. When the Summer came on, she went over to Ireland, and in various places of that kingdom, besides the metropolis, performed with the same applause she had met with in London, and with considerable advantage to her pocket. On her return to London, she was immediately honoured with a Royal command, and their Majesties were so delighted with her talents, that she experienced frequent proofs of Royal favor, and her second season at Drury-Lane proved as attractive as her preceding one. Her emoluments were now very great, and she began to find that her annual profits and that of her expences were by no means equal, for the first were so much superior, that she was enabled to lay by considerable sums every year. When the Winter

season closed, she again went over to Ireland, and afterwards played at Edinburgh, where she received, it is said, one thousand pounds for performing only ten nights. After appearing in several theatres in her way, she renewed her exertions in London, but not with quite that success she had met with before. A rumour was at this time industriously circulated, which tended for a time to check her popularity, of her uncommon parsimony, and her want of feeling for a Mrs. Curtis, another of her sisters, who was in the most distressed situation. This lady having given herself up to vicious and dissipated habits, was thought by Mrs. Siddons as an improper object of patronage or assistance, and refused to administer that support which, perhaps, the other's necessities alone demanded from so near a relation. We shall not go too far into the particulars of this disagreeable business, or venture to pass censure upon either of the parties, being fully convinced, that when disputes happen, it is no easy matter to gain those leading facts upon which a proper opinion ought to rest. Impressed with this sentiment we beg leave only to add, in addition to what we have already said, that the general complexion of the whole of this affair was of that nature, as for a short period to damp the ardour of Mrs. Siddons admirers; and indeed some of them, or at least part of the audience, one evening, when she first appeared, expressed their disapprobation at her conduct by repeated hissings, but which, after some little time, was entirely drowned in the acclamations and applause of her friends. This business has since almost entirely faded from the public mind, and our heroine was soon again reinstated in the favor and approbation of the Town.

Their

Their Majesties now particularly noticed her, and invited her frequently to Buckingham House, in order that they might have an opportunity of hearing her read, and recite several of the favorite plays. At the conclusion of the season of 1789, Mrs. Siddons thought it advisable to quit the metropolis, and remain in the country for some time, thinking that absence might be the means of restoring to her powers that attraction which she found just before began to leave them. With this intention she left London, and performed occasionally in various places in England, with considerable addition to her fame and fortune. When on this peregrination, she visited Bath, for the purpose of seeing her old friends, and admirers in that city, and also of performing there a few nights, which, owing to some regulations in the theatre, did not take place. She afterwards staid a short time with her old patrons, Lord and Lady Harcourt, and returned to London, labouring under a very severe indisposition. She has since that period been performing at the proper seasons at Drury-Lane, but we understand with no fixed salary, the managers allowing her a particular sum of money each night she performs.

MRS. JORDAN.

MRS. JORDAN is the daughter of Captain Bland, a gentleman of some property. She was born in Ireland, and was one of nine children. Captain Bland's marriage took place in that kingdom, while he was under age; and in consequence of that, and his not attending to the necessary ceremonies under such incapacity, his father got the marriage annulled, and the son was afterwards married to a lady of considerable fortune; but he did not long survive his second marriage.

In this situation the first Mrs. Bland was left with her little ones, and but a small sum was allowed for their subsistence. Miss Bland (the present Mrs. Jordan) when she arrived at an age capable of judging of her own uncertain state, very properly thought that something ought to be fixed respecting her future destination in life, and the stage offered itself as the only means of procuring that immediate alleviation to her distress which her situation required. Her first appearance was in Dublin, under the name of *Francis*, and her success was no way flattering. The die however was cast, and she was determined to proceed. She remained performing in that city for some time, and at last came over to Leeds, accompanied by her mother. The York company was then playing at that place, and she applied to Wilkinson, the manager, for his permission to appear at his theatre. She was soon announced for *Calista*, in the *Fair Penitent*, and also to perform

perform in the *Virgin Unmasked*. Her name was at this time changed to *Mrs. Jordan*. The applause she met with here was highly flattering, and it induced Wilkinson to offer her an engagement, which she accepted. Her salary, at first, was only sixteen shillings per week; but her powers proving so attractive, that the treasury felt the beneficial effects of them, she was at last raised to the highest eminence in the company, and of course her income was raised in proportion. After she had staid with Wilkinson upwards of three years, Mr. Smith, late of Drury-Lane, (and who at the time we are writing this, enjoys almost as perfect a state of health as ever) happened perchance to see her perform, and was so struck with her talents, that he instantaneously wrote to the managers of the theatre to which he formerly belonged, expressing the warmest panegyrics on the theatrical powers of Mrs. Jordan; and, in consequence of his commendations, she obtained an engagement from Mr. Sheridan. Knowing the great reputation that Mrs. Siddons enjoyed as a tragedian, she very prudently chose a part in comedy, in which she would make her *debut* in London, and the *Country Girl* was the one determined upon. The Town was so delighted with her performance, that nothing was talked of in the Theatrical World for a long time, but the new comic actress. She appeared in various characters, and with increased reputation; and the managers finding her exertions alone turn out so wonderfully productive to the theatre, raised her salary from 4l. to 8l. and from that sum, in a short time after, to 12l. allowing her also to take two benefits in the season. These, as may be supposed, produced her considerable sums of money, as she not only had the house entirely full each night, but also received many valuable presents. In 1788,

she went down in the Summer to Cheltenham, and there performed with astonishing success. The nobility of the place presented her with a very rich medal, as an acknowledgment of the great pleasure they had received from her talents. In the Winter she returned to London, where the uncommon reputation she had gained in her profession began to operate among her theatrical rivals as a sufficient cause of jealousy. Her situation, in consequence of this, was made exceedingly unpleasant, and she had almost determined to quit Drury-Lane entirely, and go over to Mr. Harris. This, however, Mr. Sheridan prevented, by raising her salary, it is said, to 30. per week. The opposition against her behind the scenes, not being likely to turn out any way successful, was soon dropped, and she became then firmly fixed in the house, and considered as the most material prop to its support.

In the Summer 1789, she went to Edinburgh, and performed there with her usual success. About this time she lost her mother; and it is but merely justice to say, that the whole of her conduct to her relative was highly exemplary, and a pattern of filial duty and affection.

Mrs. Jordan, on her return to London, formed a connection with a Mr. Ford, a gentleman of the bar, and son to Dr. Ford, then one of the proprietors of Drury-Lane Theatre. With him she lived for some time, enjoying all the comforts of domestic unanimity. These had all the appearance of stability, when an offer from so exalted and dignified a personage as the *Duke of Clarence*, staggered the constancy of the lady. A short time was sufficient for her to make up her mind, and she accepted the proposals made her by the Duke, but not until a proper provision was settled on her children. Since that period she has entirely given up her private attentions

to his Royal Highness, and appears at this moment to have as firm a possession of his affections as she ever enjoyed.

MISS FARREN.

THIS lady's father was an actor in a strolling company, and married a haberdasher in Tewkesbury: he soon persuaded her to launch into the same line of life as himself, in which state they for many years lived together, surrounded by the most poignant wretchedness and distress. In the midst of their calamities he died, leaving behind him a wife, three daughters, and a son. Melancholy as this prospect appeared to the unfortunate mother, still, by perseverance and industry in her profession, she contrived to obtain the means of support for her numerous family. Having no other alternative, she reared her children to the stage, and great promise was, even at that early period, formed of the present subject of our memoirs. Thinking to improve their situation, in a better and more respectable company, they repaired to Liverpool, recommended to the manager, Mr. Younger, who immediately engaged the whole family. Miss Betsy Farren (the present object of our attention) made her *debut* there in the part of *Rosetta*, in *Love in a Village*, with considerable eclat, and afterwards performed *Lady Townly*. She soon became a great favorite at Liverpool, and her salary being raised, she began now to emerge from her former obscurity. Her fame reached London; and the late Mr. Colman engaged her at his theatre. In the Summer of

1777 she appeared there, within a few nights of the first attempt of the late Mr. Henderson in the metropolis. In a very short time she was much talked of as an elegant and polished actress. From this house she went to Covent-Garden, and tried her powers in tragedy, but not with equal success. She afterwards obtained a situation in Old Drury, and there alternately appeared in tragedy and comedy, but in the latter she displayed evident superiority of talent. She proved a most incomparable substitute for Mrs. Abington, who at that time engaged herself to Mr. Harris.

Miss Farren's beauty now began to be equally admired with her professional abilities; and it is said that the present great leader of the Opposition party was at one time more than commonly enamoured of her charms. The Earl of Derby, however, professing more honorable attachment than the English Demosthenes, gained more of the attention of the lady; and his Lordship's conduct has since proved the sincerity of his professions, and also given a sufficient pledge of his future intentions towards her. Through this nobleman's interest and patronage, she has been introduced to the first of the nobility, and her amiable and engaging manners have endeared most of them to her interest. She has occasionally performed in Ireland with an uncommon portion of success; and having taken over with her letters of recommendation to the nobility there, she soon became much noticed by them.

Miss Farren's mother constantly lives with her, and we understand each performs her part with exemplary propriety; the one as a dutiful daughter, and the other as a tender and affectionate parent.

MRS. GOODALL,

MRS. GOODALL is the daughter of a Mr. Stanton, manager of a strolling company, and was introduced on the stage at a very early period of her life. Tragedy appeared at first to attract her attention more than comedy, and her father thought her a girl of great theatrical promise. With an intention of giving her every opportunity that he conceived would be of service to her, he obtained from the manager of the Bath theatre permission for her to perform there; and she gave so much satisfaction to the audience by her performance of *Rosalind*, that she was immediately engaged. It was about this time that she married Mr. Goodall, a lieutenant of the navy. In the midst of her popularity in this city, a dispute took place between her and another actress, respecting the choice of a character, and it terminated in Mrs. Goodall leaving the place, and coming up to London, where she obtained, by the interest of her father, together with the fame of her own abilities, a very respectable engagement at Drury-Lane. *Rosalind* was her first part, and in that she convinced the Town of her possessing the most eminent talents. She soon made rapid progress in Public favour, insomuch, that an attempt was made to check her in her career of popularity. Mr. Kemble, then acting manager, offered her the part of *Lady Ann*, in *Richard the Third*, which she refusing to play, as beneath her talents, a war immediately commenced between the parties. After some time elapsing, the affair was amicably adjusted.

Since

Since that period she has gained additional fame, by performing many of Miss Farren's parts, and some of Mrs. Jordan's. Mrs. Goodall is remarkable for the elegant symmetry of her person; and when dressed in male attire, presents a finer proportion of figure than any other lady on the stage.

MISS POPE.

MISS POPE is the daughter of a respectable tradesman, once an inhabitant of Little Russel-Street, Covent-Garden. She displayed very early powers for the stage, and made her first appearance at Colman's Theatre, in the character of *Polly Honeycomb*. Her reception, although in so trifling a part, was highly flattering, and she soon became an able substitute for the late Mrs. Clive, who had at that time in contemplation a retirement from the stage. Miss Pope, finding so fortunate an opening for her to exercise her talents, undertook the performance of many of those characters in which the other so conspicuously excelled; and having gained the favor of the Town by her inimitable manner of playing them, she soon established herself as one of the first comic actresses that ever trod the boards of an English Theatre. She has been fixed in London ever since; and preferring a settled life to that precarious mode of living usually experienced by those who perform in the country, she never could be induced to quit the metropolis, so that very little novelty of circumstances have occurred during her life,

to

to make the biography of it any way entertaining. Having for a long series of years enjoyed a permanent situation in Drury-Lane, and with it a very considerable salary, she has, it is said, amassed a large fortune, and means, as we understand, shortly to retire from the profession.

MRS. POWELL.

THIS Lady, in the early part of her life, experienced great distresses. They were at last alleviated, in some measure, by her obtaining a servant's place; but a menial situation not being that which suited a mind like hers, she quitted her servitude, and, it is said, followed a serjeant to Coxheath Camp. She therefore attracted the notice of the officers; and taking the name of Mrs. Farmer, she eloped with a captain to London, where she lived with him for some months. Growing tired of his female associate, our military lover left her rather abruptly; and, in a short time she was reduced to a state of penury and want. In the midst of her distresses, one of her male admirers advised her to try the stage; and having long had a partiality for the drama, she was soon persuaded to make a trial, and her *debut* was in the part of *Alicia*, at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, in 1787. She was received by the audience with more than common applause, although she could not obtain an engagement in London until the year after, at which time she obtained a situation in Drury-Lane, and made her first appearance there in the character of *Juliet*. She also performed many of Mrs.

Siddons

Siddons parts, and was considered next to that great actress in the walks of the Tragic Muse.

In the Summer of 1789, she performed at Liverpool, and with considerable success. Mr. Powell, the prompter of that theatre, offered her his hand in marriage, which she accepted. Her conduct since she entered into that state, has been highly praise-worthy, and she at present enjoys a considerable rank in the profession, equal, if not superior, to any other lady at the same house, in her line of acting, with, of course, the exception of the inimitable Siddons.

MRS. WARD.

THIS Lady was a mantua-maker at Liverpool, but not attending much to business, she found the stage was more congenial to her disposition, and would, she thought, be more productive. She therefore soon applied to the manager of that place, then Mr. Younger, for permission to make a trial, which was attended with uncommon success. At that time she had precedence in the theatre to the present Mrs. Siddons, who then belonged to the same company. In this period of her popularity, she received the addresses of a Mr. Ward, a comedian of some eminence there, and soon her name, which was that of *Haare*, was changed to the other. She afterwards got an engagement at Drury-Lane, and shortly became a tolerable favorite with the Town. From that period she has been increasing in reputation, and is certainly an actress of considerable use in the theatre.

MRS.

MRS. J. KEMBLE.

MRS. KEMBLE is the daughter of Mrs. Hopkins, wife of the once prompter of Drury-Lane Theatre. Her first appearance on the stage attracted no very considerable notice, and she became more an object of use than that of merit. She was thought, among the actors, rather a pretty woman, and the late Mr. Brereton paid her a more marked attention than any other: he at last promised her marriage, but, from what cause we know not, was rather tardy in keeping his word; when Mr. Garrick sent for him, and positively declared, that if he did not perform his promise with Miss Hopkins, he must give up his situation in Drury-Lane.—Things appearing rather serious, Mr. Brereton consented to marry the lady.

Mrs. Brereton continued pursuing her profession as usual, and with evident marks of improvement. In the year 1786, she lost her husband, who, it is said, possessed so great a partiality for Mrs. Siddons, as in the end to affect his brain. In this melancholy state he died. Mrs. Brereton's conduct, during the whole of Mr. Brereton's indisposition, was truly exemplary, and her private worth gained her the respect and friendship of an extensive acquaintance. A young agreeable widow, with so respectable a character, it was not probable would long remain without admirers, and Mr. J. Kemble was among the number: his courtship (if it may be so termed) was rather curious. From the first time he opened his

mind to the lady to the period she gave her consent to marry him, he never spoke to her but in the way of his professional duties : he limited her to a fortnight to consider of the business ; and the offer being thought by her friends by no means a bad one, she agreed to the proposal. Since that time, she has, through his interest, been placed in some very respectable parts, but we think she has displayed no greater excellence in any of them than she shewed before : however, she is found of service in the theatre, and maintains in private an estimable character.

MRS. CROUCH.

THIS Lady is the daughter of Mr. Phillips, an attorney, a gentleman who has dabbled a little in the literary way, but with very slender pretensions to fame. His daughter having displayed great powers of voice, was much noticed by the late Mr. Linley ; and it was at last agreed that she should be articled to him for a particular number of years, he receiving half of her salary. She made her first attempt at Drury-Lane in the part of *Mandane*, in *Artaxerxes*, in the year 1781 ; and the beauty of her face, together with the harmony and sweetness of her voice, prepossessed the town greatly in her favor. After she played the whole season in London, with increased reputation, she went over to Dublin, and there soon became the admiration of all admirers of vocal music ; and the attractions of her beauty were equally as great

great there as the place she had left. Several gentlemen of family and fortune were particularly attentive to her, and rumour has circulated the report that one of them felt an attachment more honourable than any of the others, and promised her marriage. His relations alarmed at the determination, it is supposed interfered, for the matter soon after dropt. On her return to London she was still closely beset by many suitors ; but a Mr. Crouch, of the navy, who was thought at the time to be a man of considerable wealth, was preferred by her, and they were soon afterwards married.

Mrs. Crouch continued progressively improving in her profession, when Mr. Kelly coming into this country and establishing himself as one of our first singers, particularly admired her voice and manner of singing. His instructions are said to have proved highly advantageous to her, and in a great measure served to make her so perfect a mistress in the science of music as she is acknowledged to be at present. Besides performing several summers in various parts of Ireland. She has occasionally sung in several of the provincial theatres in England, and her reputation as a singer is now known in almost every place in the three kingdoms.

A certain great personage some time ago became much enamoured of her beauty, but the flame did not long survive, and he soon felt an indifference, which the charms of the lady were not able to prevent. There is more constancy in her real instructor ; but his passion is of such a texture, as to be accommodated to any thing.

SIGNORA STORACE.

STORACE's father was a considerable player on the bass, and distinguished himself much on that instrument at Marybone Gardens. His daughter was born in London, and went over at a very early part of her life to Florence. She made her first appearance there in serious opera, and was well received. She afterwards travelled over various parts of Italy, and was particularly noticed at Vienna by the Imperial Joseph. In that city she got acquainted with Dr. Fisher, once well known in London for his inimitable talents on the violin. A marriage soon took place between them; but it was in a short time found, that their tempers and mode of thinking were very different. It being the wish of the parties themselves, and the several friends of each, a mandate was obtained from the Emperor to dissolve the marriage; and the lady, after remaining on the Continent for upwards of four years, returned to England. Her first appearance in London was in the year 1789, when she performed in the opera of the *Haunted Tower*. The sprightliness of her manners, and the excellence of her singing, made her much applauded, and soon rendered her an object of great consequence to the theatre. Many stories have been circulated respecting this lady's propensity to avarice, and of her want of feeling to the distresses of her once husband Dr. Fisher, who had left Germany, and went to Ireland, with an intention of obtaining a livelihood by teaching music, and performing at concerts.

His

His profits were so very trifling in this pursuit, that the most poignant distress soon surrounded him, accompanied by a severe indisposition. In this situation application was made to Storace for ten pounds, in order to relieve him from some pressing inconveniences that required immediate alleviation; but she refused to part with the sum, although trifling, and never paid any attention to some further requests that were made her from the same quarter.

Of late seasons she does not appear to have increased in public favor.

MISS LEAK.

THIS Lady, who has of late grown so much in the favor of the town, was born at Beckham, in Norfolk, where her father lived, and followed the occupation of farming. His daughter, who had very early in life discovered great propensity for music, was brought to London under the care of her aunt, with an intention of having her placed under the tuition of a proper master, that she might receive regular instructions in her favorite study. Dr. Arnold being much pleased with her voice, articled her for a stated time, and she soon convinced him that his expectations of her abilities were well founded. The rapid improvements she made in singing, induced him to bring her out, for the first time before a public audience, in a concert at Freemason's-hall, where she was highly applauded; and the Doctor seeing the value of the

prize he had in his possession, was determined to make the most of it, and soon after had her engaged at the Hay-Market Theatre, a considerable part of her salary being devoted to the musical instructor, according to the articles. The town became in a short time much prepossessed in her favor, owing to the sprightly simplicity of her manners, and the taste and sweetness she displayed in her singing. She soon performed most of *Storage's* characters, and very little, if any, inferior to that lady. Miss Leak now rendered herself an object to Drury-Lane, the Managers of which theatre made her an offer of an engagement, which she accepted ; and we do not doubt, if brought forward there, which has not hitherto been the case, but that she will ultimately be entitled to a place among our first public favorites.

Her conduct in private life, particularly that part of it which relates to her own relatives, is highly commendable, and makes her esteemed by an extensive and respectable acquaintance.

MRS. BLAND.

THIS Lady's mother was a poor Italian Jewess, and being remarked when a child for possessing a sweet voice, she was articled to the managers of the Circus, who employed her at the time the burlettas were sustained by children at that place. She soon distinguished herself from among the other juvenile performers ; and when her time at this theatre expired,



pired, she immediately repaired to Dublin and played AT DALY's, to the no small entertainment of the town. Her fame at last became so great, that the Managers of Drury-Lane, who just then had been deserted by the famous Mrs. Wrighten, engaged Miss Romanzini to supply her place. In a very short time she ingratiated herself so much with the public, that every character she assumed was attended with the most unbounded applause. In the summer of 1789 she performed at Liverpool with great success; and in London since that period has been pursuing her profession with increased fame (until lately), playing when the winter season closes, most commonly at Colman's, where she is become one of its greatest supporters.

She is married to Mr. Bland, brother of Mrs. Jordan; but of late the inconstant wife has at various times some little propensity to *variety*. This inclination appears at present to have in some degree subsided, as she has taken an uncommon liking to *Mr. Caulfield* of the same house, with whom she lives with all the constancy of true affection, and which of course has caused a separation between her and her husband. Her conduct in the whole of this business has considerably decreased her in the estimation of the town, and she is by no means so great a favorite as formerly.

MISS DECAMP.

MISS DECAMP made her first attempt on the stage as a dancer, and in that situation she remained for some time with no inconsiderable share of merit. Possessing an inclination for acting as well as dancing, she was occasionally permitted

mitted to perform some trifling characters, in which she discovered so much promise, that others of more consequence were given her. Still she was kept back from playing those leading parts which she conceived her talents would sustain with propriety, until she got an engagement at the Summer Theatre. The *Beggar's Opera* being reversed at that house, Miss Decamp performed *Macheath*, in which she displayed so much animation in her acting, and such taste in her singing, that she convinced the town she possessed talents of a superior quality. From this time she was intrusted both at Colman's as well as afterwards at Drury-Lane, with some of the best parts; and we find her now rising to that eminence of professional merit, that will make her a considerable object to any theatre.

Mr. Kemble was incautiously induced some time ago to attempt the taking very improper liberties with this lady; but the manner which she conducted herself during the whole of this business, has impressed the town greatly in favor of her discretion in private life.

MRS. BOOTH.

MRS. BOOTH is the wife of the taylor who is employed in Drury-Lane Theatre. Very little are we enabled to say of this lady, and indeed the unimportance of her rank makes it by no means necessary for us to say much. We shall, therefore, merely add, that she has been performing in London, and in various theatres in the country, for these many years. Her cast of parts have of late been mostly those of Mrs. Love, and in them she is respectable.

MISS

MISS HEARD.

WE have but little to say of this Lady. As she advances in the profession, and probably gains more into the favour of the Town, we shall then consider her entitled to a space of greater extent in this work, than we can with propriety allow her at present.

It may be said that Miss Heard, as it were, was nurtured upon the boards, for her parents long sought an existence by their exertions on the stage. In this situation, it is not in the least surprizing that she imbibed an early partiality for the drama, and we find her making a public attempt when a child, at Drury-Lane, in the character of the *Young Duke of York*, in *Richard III.* Her manner of going through the part gave general satisfaction, and her talents promised in time to arrive to something that might be exerted to the service of the theatre. The next part in which she was noticed was that of the *Child in Isabella*, at the period when Mrs. Siddons was so much followed, and particularly to see her sustain the arduous and interesting heroine of that play. Miss Heard was not for a long time after this much patronized by the managers, or entrusted with any part in which she could have an opportunity of exerting herself. She, therefore, in the Summer, accepted of an engagement at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, where she soon convinced the Town of her possessing claims to their attention, if placed in the line to which her talents directed. In many pieces she

now

now appeared, and *grave, sentimental girls* seemed to be those in which she most excelled.

She has since been considered an object for the managers of Drury-Lane, and we have no doubt but in time she will prove of considerable use to them.

MISS TIDSWELL.

OF this Lady we shall not be very copious in our account, and for the same reason which induced us to be so scanty in our detail of the one we have just now left. Miss Tidswell is a native of London, and the daughter of an officer. She was sent young over to France to be educated; and in the midst of apparent comfort and opulence, her father died, and left her almost destitute. In this distressed state she returned to this country, and not knowing what to turn her mind to, she was recommended to the managers of Drury-Lane, who engaged her at a very low salary. Her *debut* was *Leonora*, in the *Mourning Bride*, and in the little she had to do, she displayed as much merit as could well be expected.

In the Summer she performs most generally at some provincial theatre, and the one in Liverpool she is employed in oftener than any other. *Waiting maids*, and characters of that description, are those she commonly entertains, and as some person must be got to play them, we do not see but that Miss Tidswell fills the situation as well as can be reasonably wished.

COVENT-

Covent-Garden Theatre.

MR. LEWIS.

THIS deserved favorite of the Town made his appearance very early on the stage, in his father's company of comedians, at that time playing at Shrewsbury. The manager soon after this went to Newry, in Ireland, to manage a company there; and his son having displayed an uncommon vivacity of talent, he placed him in several respectable characters. In the midst of this success, old Lewis died, and in some months after, his widow married a Mr. Dawson, who immediately took his wife, together with young Lewis, to Edinburgh. Here our hero performed with considerable eclat; and after playing at Whitehaven, and other places, with the same success, he returned to Ireland with his mother and father-in-law. Dawson soon formed a scheme of opening a new theatre in Dublin, and in a short time fitted up a very elegant one, though small, in Capel-street, where his success was so great, assisted by the exertions of his son-in-law, that he became a formidable rival to the other theatres. About this time Mr. Lewis married a Miss Leeson, who had been brought over to Dublin by Mr. Macklin, for the purpose of introducing her on the stage.

Every

Every season began to increase his popularity more and more. Among the number of parts in which he appeared, *Belcour* seemed to attract most admirers; and Mr. Cumberland, the author of the *West-Indian*, having seen him perform it, was so highly pleased, that he immediately recommended Lewis to the managers of Covent-Garden, who engaged him at a tolerable salary. His success in London was great in genteel comedy; but when he attempted several parts in tragedy, the Town soon found where his forte lay. Unrivalled in the sprightly walks of the first, he shone a luminary of superior brilliancy, and his knowledge of stage business induced Mr. Harris to offer him the situation of acting manager in the year 1781, which he has held ever since.

MR. HOLMAN.

THIS Gentleman's father (who died many years ago) was an adjutant in a regiment of militia. His son was enabled, we believe, by some very good friends, more than by family assistance, to receive his education at Dr. Barrow's school, in Soho-Square; and when he had remained there a sufficient time, he was removed to Oxford, and entered a member of Queen's College. He was intended for the church, but possessing a great predilection, together with every appearance of latent abilities, for the stage, he was recommended by his friends to turn his attention to the drama, as the means of a future livelihood; and after having displayed

played in private some remarkable proofs of theatrical talents, he at last made his public appearance in the part of Romeo, at Covent-Garden. He was so favourably received, that Mr. Harris immediately engaged him for three years; but by the expiration of the term, his reputation with the Town was not increased in proportion to the time; still he insisted upon an addition to his salary, which not being complied with, he quitted London, and went to Dublin, where he had before played with great applause: his former success there attended him now; and after remaining in that city some time, he repaired to Edinburgh, and performed there, and also in most of the principal theatres in England.

When he came back to London, matters were soon settled between him and Mr. Harris, and he was again reinstated in his former situation in Covent-Garden. Since that period he has remained stationary at that theatre, filling the most respectable parts in tragedy.

MR. POPE.

MR. POPE was born in Cork, and bred a painter: he followed the profession, but his profits not being equal to his wants, he was determined to try the stage, and his reception in the first part he played (*Oroonoko*) was so very flattering, that he at once made up his mind to proceed. He played several characters with considerable eclat; and Miss Young being at Cork at that time, was so pleased with his acting, that she wrote over to Mr. Harris, recommending

him as a theatrical prodigy, and he was instantaneously engaged by that gentleman, at a considerable salary. Before he came over, he married his patroness at Dublin; and his first appearance at Covent-Garden was attended with that success his friends flattered him he should receive, and for the whole season he continued to play some of the leading characters in tragedy, although not with much increase of reputation. However, some time after, a disagreement having taken place between Mr. Holman and Mr. Harris, that induced the first to quit the theatre, and Mr. Henderson being then just dead, most of the first parts were left unfilled, so that Mr. Pope became the only person that could undertake the performance of them. These he sustained with tolerable credit to himself, considering that some of them had been long held by the last mentioned actor with such general consent. Mr. Holman returned in the year 1790 to the same house; and our hero thinking he might be thrown back, retired for a time from the stage, at least from a London one. He went to Edinburgh, and there met with uncommon applause, and likewise, during his absence, performed in several of the principal theatres in England. Mr. Harris, however, thinking that Covent-Garden was in want of him, re-engaged him; and having made a proper distribution of the principal parts in tragedy between Mr. Holman and the present object of our memoirs, the business of his house is conducted with order and cordiality. We think Mr. Pope is of late gaining considerably in public favor, and as the stage stands at present, is, no doubt, of great theatrical utility.

MR.

MR. HARLEY.

MR. HARLEY was for some time a banker's clerk, and afterwards became, at different times, clerk to lottery-offices. A situation of this kind did not much suit his inclinations, and having entertained a considerable *pembant* for the profession of an actor, and receiving some very material instructions from the late Mr. Henderson, he was resolved to try his fortune on the stage, and went with that intention to Norwich, where he soon made his first attempt in no less a part than that of *Richard the Third*. The audience in that city soon discovered marks of talent about him, and in a few seasons he became so great a favourite, that he was dignified by the name of the *Norwich Roscius*. His fame reached London; and Mr. Harris, eager to give the Town whatever is likely to afford them entertainment, engaged him at Covent-Garden, and he made his *debut* in the metropolis in the year 1789, in his favorite part of *Richard the Third*, in which he gave such general satisfaction, that the play was performed for six or seven Mondays successively. He has since appeared in many leading characters in tragedy, and has fixed himself in the company as one of the most useful actors in it.

MR. COOPER.

THIS Gentleman is not yet quite twenty years of age; his father was a surgeon, and went very young to India, where he remained but a short time. On his return to England, he lived at Harrow on the Hill, at which place he became well established in his profession; but, from what reason we know not, he quitted this situation, and returned to India; here he died, and left a young family, subject to all the difficulties of the orphan and widow state.

Mr. Cooper was fortunate in being related to a man, equally eminent for his virtues and his genius; a man, to whom English literature is indebted for works, not only superior in point of stile, composition, invention, and research, but the beneficent intention of which has been the increasing happiness of the human race. Protected from want, nurtured in the rudiments of science, and excited to emulate the virtuous and the wise, under this gentleman Mr. Cooper received a liberal education. Before he had attained his seventeenth year, it became necessary to examine in what manner he might become most useful to himself and society. A person well known in the literary and political world, and who was the intimate friend of Mr. Cooper's protector was consulted. The stage was advised, as the most eligible, and adopted; and this third person undertook to aid Mr. Cooper in his new course of studies. At this early period, therefore, he began in a more regular and scientific manner

manner than is usual among theatrical candidates, whose motives too frequently are, either to rid themselfes of the authority of master and parent, indulge in idleness and dissipation, or to gratify a crude vanity, which frequently is attended by misfortune. After a continued application of several months, it was thought advisable that Mr. Cooper should go into the country, not so much to make an experiment of his powers, as to acquire the habit of facing an audience, treading the stage, and of that self-possession, ease, and presence of mind, without which no actor ever arrived at excellency. Various excursions of this kind were made, and, as was foreseen, Mr. Cooper at each time returned, more or less infected by the stage vices of actors, who engage in a profession to which they have never devoted a day's serious study. At each interval however, following the advice, and profiting by the observation of his friends, he recommenced his task with that increasing ardour, and that enthusiasm of perseverance, which the applause of those in whose judgment he could confide, the self-confidence he daily gained, and the high probability he felt of success, inspired. About six months before his appearance at Covent-Garden theatre, he quitted the provincial stage, and devoted himself wholly to the investigation of certain characters it was his ambition to perform. *Hamlet* being thought a character that would afford him ample scope for his abilities, it was fixed upon as the part in which he was to make his *entré* before a London audience. The manner in which he performed this arduous and difficult character is well known. Since the days of Powell, the Town has not seen an actor that displayed talents of so much promise on the first night of his appearance. His reception was so highly flattering, that he repeated the

same part three or four times, and with increased success. His efforts since have confirmed the favourable opinion the critics entertained at first of his abilities : and we have no doubt, when mellowed by the stealing hand of Time, but that his theatrical powers will place him among the first performers of the time.

MR. MIDDLETON.

THIS Gentleman is of a very respectable family in the county of Westmeath, in Ireland, and is son to Mr. Richard Magan, very eminent in the medical line, in the city of Dublin, where our hero was born.

After receiving a very liberal education, his father placed him as pupil to Robert Bowes, Esq. then President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland ; but however anxious he was to comply with the wishes of his father, the *operational* part of surgery was so repugnant to his feelings, that at the end of two years it materially affected his health.

At a private theatre, his performance of *Scioltō* in the *Fair Penitent*, before he was 17 years of age, was much noticed ; and Mr. Holman being at that time playing at Dublin, he obtained an introduction to him, before whom he recited Collins's Ode and some scenes of *Scioltō*, so much to the satisfaction of that gentleman, that he passed the highest encomiums on his theatrical powers.

Mr. Magan then determined on the stage, and assuming the name of Middleton, he set off for London, and waited on

on Mr. Harris, who engaged him for the following season. In the mean time, Mr. Harris kindly recommended him to the Bath manager, at which city he made his *début* on the 30th of January, 1788, in *Othello*, and was highly applauded. He afterwards performed *Romeo* with equal success, and on the 22d of September following, he commenced with the same character at Covent-Garden, which took a considerable run during that season. The next Summer he went to Dublin, and performed *Romeo*, *Othello*, *Oroonoko*, &c. During the after season, he continued in Ireland, performing at Dublin in the Winter seasons, and at Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Belfast, and other provincial theatres in the Summers. On some difference with the manager, he took leave of the Dublin audience, in an elegant address, after performing Leon to Mr. Lewis's Copper Captain, in June, 1792, being for his own benefit.

In January, 1793, he appeared in *Othello*, in Edinburgh, performed *Romeo*, *Jaffier*, *Douglas*, *Captain Irwine*, and *Hamlet*, in all of which characters he was particularly applauded by the Scotch critics. On the 23d of September, 1793, he appeared in *Othello*, at his return to Covent-Garden, to a crowded audience; and on the repetitions of his *Romeo*, during the course of that season, the Town, by their applause, testified a considerable degree of satisfaction at his performances. He has since continued in London, and is likely, in the course of time, to become a great favourite with the Town.

MR. TOMS.

THIS Gentleman is the youngest son of the late Mr. John Toms, of Maiden-Lane, Covent-Garden, a respectable tradesman, who died about three years ago. His present son was placed in the house of a dealer in musical instruments, but this situation not suiting his inclinations, he quitted it, and determined to commence actor, a profession he had always admired. A friend introduced him to Mr. Wild, of Covent-Garden, who soon took him to Mr. Harris. The manager being rather pleased with his recital of some passages out of Shakespeare, fixed a night for his appearance in the part of Douglas, in the year 1790. The audience did not appear to be much pleased with his performance; but when we consider that this was the first attempt on any stage, of a young man quite untutored in the profession, great allowance ought surely to be made. Being advised to go into the country, and play for some time, in order to accustom himself to the business of the stage, he went for that purpose to Edinburgh: he afterwards performed at *Norwich, Shrewsbury, Weymouth*, and various other places. Mr. Harris has thought proper to engage him this Winter at Covent-Garden; and from what we saw of him in the part of the *Ghost*, in *Hamlet*, we think he will prove of considerable service to the theatre.

MR.

MR. QUICK.

MR. QUICK was born in London, and his father followed the brewery business, with credit and profit to himself. His son, from what reason we know not, was, at a very early period of life, a strolling actor, in company with the present Mr. Bannister, sen. He was so much noticed for his vivacity and humour, that Mr. Foote engaged him at his house. Want of opportunity prevented him for a long time making any conspicuous figure, until at last he was requested by the late *Shuter* to perform the part of *Mordecai* in the farce of *Love-à-la-Mode*. He acquitted himself in that character so much to the satisfaction of the audience, that an engagement at Covent-Garden theatre was the consequence : he, however, there remained unnoticed many seasons, the managers not intrusting him with any part that he could make any thing of. Mr. Younger, the prompter, seeing such considerable merit thrown behind the shade, requested him to undertake the performance of *Mungo*, in the *Padlock*; and here the Town saw an originality of humour they had not before been used to. Many characters were now given him of considerable credit in low comedy, in all of which he displayed considerable comic talents ; and when the *Duenna* made its appearance, his manner of pourtraying *Isaac*, the Jew, gave such general satisfaction, that he was at once placed among the first comedians of the time. At the close of the Winter seasons, he used occasionally to go to Bristol,

and

and perform there. It was in this city he married his present wife, the daughter of a clergyman of the place. He has also played at other theatres in England, particularly those of Liverpool and Portsmouth; and wherever he went, success always attended him. For many years he has been established in London, and possesses as much public favor as any other performer on the English stage. Of late he was attacked with a very severe indisposition, which, it was thought, at one time, would have been fatal; but, fortunately for the admirers of the drama, the complaint took a favorable turn, and he is now once more reinstated in his old situation in Covent-Garden.

MR. FAWCETT.

THIS Gentleman is the son of Mr. Fawcett, the actor, who was a long time in a very low situation in Drury-Lane theatre. The son was intended for a linen-draper, but before he had been long bound to the business, he eloped from his master, and joined an itinerant company of comedians in the country. In this situation he remained for many seasons, gaining but little profit, although his fame as a performer was sufficiently great, as to induce Mr. Wilkinson to engage him at York, where, in a short time, he became one of the most admired performers that ever played in that city. It was here that he married his present wife, a Mrs. Mills, and his reputation reaching Mr. Harris's ears, he was engaged to supply the place of the late Mr. Edwin, who

who the Town had just then lost. To succeed so great an actor was a perilous attempt ; but, notwithstanding the disadvantage he laboured under, Mr. Fawcett acquitted himself to the no small satisfaction of the audience ; and ever since he has been increasing in reputation, and is now considered as one of the greatest favorites at Covent-Garden.

MR. MUNDEN.

MR. MUNDEN, we believe, was born in London, and followed the business of a poultier for some time with his father ; but whether success did not attend his exertions in trade, or his inclinations were not that way bent, he turned actor, and for many seasons boldly stemmed the torrent of adversity, possessing no other situation but that filled by an inferior performer in several of the strolling companies in different parts of England. Thus long unnoticed, he was at last so fortunate as to make an impression on the play-going people of Newcastle upon Tyne, in one or two characters. This success induced him to try the performance of others in low comedy ; and from playing *Alexander*, *Hamlet*, *Richard*, and most of the first tragic parts, he descended to the more humble walks of Thalia, and found his *forte* lay in the *sack*, not the *buffet*. In this town he soon became a great favorite ; and his fame spreading to *Chester*, *Whitehaven*, and other places, his benefits turned out so very profitable, that he began to save money ; and by the time he came to London, it was supposed he had a few hundreds at his banker's. His success

success in this city was at first considerable; but we think he has not increased his reputation so much, as was thought would be the case from his *début*. He has, however, a considerable hold of the Town; and we understand, from a prudent attention to his private concerns, he is enabled to add something handsome every year to what he originally had.

MR. ENCLEDON.

THIS performer is a native of Cornwall, where his father followed the business of an apothecary. He was very early put an apprentice to the famous composer Jackson, of Exeter; but after being with his master sometime, he grew tired of music, and entered himself as a midshipman on board the *Formidable* man of war in the year 1779. He went to the West-Indies, and remained in the sea-service for upwards of two years; when he returned to England, determined, as his voice had been much praised by every person that heard it, to make a trial of his talents on the stage, which he did at Southampton, in the part of *Alphonso*, in *The Castle of Andalusia*. His reception was highly flattering; and after continuing in this company for upwards of a year, he was engaged at Bath, where he attracted much of the public attention, until Rauzini, the famous teacher and composer of music in that city, took him under his tuition, and in a short time brought him into notice, by making him sing in some of the first concerts there. He was now thought an object worthy of the notice of the managers of Vauxhall; and he was employed

ployed to sing at that place in the summer. His improvement in vocal music began now to be so rapid under the instructions of his master, that every society and club in Bath was anxious to have him for a member ; and he became at last so generally admired, that Mr. Harris enlisted him under his banners. From no very great success at first on the boards of Covent-Garden, he is become now a wonderful favorite, and is justly considered to possess the finest voice for a man on the English stage.

MR. JOHNSTONE.

MR. JOHNSTONE was born in Dublin, and his mother sold second-hand cloaths in that city. Her trade brought her frequently across the players, and her son thus imbibed an inclination of following their profession. He could not, however, gratify himself with this wish in that city, so he repaired to the country parts of the kingdom, and there accomplished his intention. A strolling actor's life, when put to the trial, did not quite accord with his liking, so he was determined to stroll about the world not in that situation, but in a military one, and he enlisted as a common soldier in his Majesty's service. He remained in the army some years, until at last obtaining his discharge, which we are told they granted without much reluctance, he came to Dublin, and got an engagement in one of the theatres in that city. He became now to be noticed as a singer ; and finding a lady engaged in the same house, much patronized for her

musical powers, named *Miss Poëtier*, he paid his addressees to her, and she consented to marry him. Some time after he came over to London, and obtained a situation in Covent-Garden Theatre. His first part was *Lionel*, and he was well received by the town. However, his conduct to his wife, who, it is said, died of a broken heart, served to damp the ardour of those who were inclined to praise him. He was living with the late notorious Mrs. Wilson at the very time his wife was on her death-bed. These circumstances, together with many other unpleasant things, became generally known, and very properly were as generally reprobated.

He is now married again to the daughter of Mr. Bolton, wine-merchant ; and his principal use at present on the stage is in playing the Irish characters, Mr. Incledon having taken most of the singing parts from him, being more capable of filling them.

MR. BOWDEN.

THIS singer was born at Manchester, and bound to a gentleman who kept a cotton manufactory in that city ; but having been much caressed by all convivial parties for his taste in music, he did not pay that attention to business he ought to have done. However, he served out the whole of his time, and absolutely set up for himself in the same line ; but ill success, and hearing continually the greatest encomiums on his singing, he determined to make an attempt on the

the stage, and on his coming up to London, he got an engagement with Mr. Harris. The town did not appear to be much pleased with his powers ; and after staying one twelve month at Covent-Garden, he left that house, and went to *Dublin*, then to *Edinburgh*, and also to many of the principal towns in England. In 1794 he was re-engaged at Covent-Garden, and he is there employed at present, but with very little addition to his former reputation.

MR. BERNARD.

THIS gentleman was born in *Portsmouth*, and his father was a lieutenant in the navy, who intended his son for the same pursuit. This intention, however, was frustrated by the boy having a great predilection for the stage ; and in order to satisfy his inclination, he run away from his parents and joined a strolling company of actors at that time in *Taunton*. It would be needless, and by no means entertaining, to enter into a relation of the different places he performed at for several years after this. Suffice it to say, that after being noticed at *Norwich*, he was invited to *Bath*, together with his wife, who he had just then married, to perform there at very good salaries ; and they both, particularly the gentleman, became very great favorites in that city. In 1787 Mr. Harris engaged him at Covent-Garden, and he played *Archer* the first night of his appearance with credit to himself, and to the satisfaction of his audience. His parts are mostly those of the fops in light comedy. On the engagement of M. Marshall our hero retired from London, and re-

newed his old strolling life ; but he is now once more come back to Mr. Harris, with whom he appears likely to remain.

In the summer he goes to Plymouth, and manages the theatre in that place.

MR. MACREADY.

MR. MACREADY is a native of Dublin, where his father carries on the business of an upholsterer to a considerable extent. The son soon disgusted with the regularity of trade, followed the bent of his inclinations, which led him to the stage ; and after making some few attempts in the country parts of Ireland, he at once resolved to try the capital, and made applications to Daly, who engaged him more from a persuasion that his father's connections, which were very extensive, would be of service to the theatre, than from any opinion he entertained of the abilities of the actor. Macready performed with very little notice from the town, and therefore his first object was to get to London when his engagement expired in Dublin. Being tolerably well recommended to the Covent-Garden Manager, he was fixt at a salary, and having turned out remarkably industrious in the profession, he is found of use in the theatre, and that is all we can say of him.

MR.

MR. HULL.

THIS we believe is now the oldest performer on the English stage. We are entirely unacquainted with what Mr. Hull was first intended for. He has been so many years in the profession, that we must go back to a very remote period indeed in our researches were we to attempt making them, for the purpose of ascertaining the fact in question. It not being of very considerable consequence, we shall briefly state, that this performer has not only made himself a useful, and in some parts an excellent, actor, but also was the principal promoter of that philanthropic institution, called *The Theatrical Fund*, established for the relief of distressed performers in the evening of life, when incapable of pursuing the profession. This will no doubt hand his name down to posterity, as a man of amiable disposition, which has been displayed in almost every act of his life since that period. Of late years on the stage he has performed *stewards, old faithful trusty servants*, and parts of that description, with great credit, which may in a great measure be owing to the well-known integrity of the man in private life.

MR. RICHARDSON.

THIS gentleman was born in the city of Worcester, where his father carried on a considerable manufacture. He was at first intended for the church, but that idea was given up, and he was bound to his father, with whom he remained

until the age of twenty-one. He then came to London, and lived some time in an eminent mercantile house, when he returned to Worcester, and entered into business with his brother in that city. The regularity and method so necessary in trade did not appear to suit his disposition, so he determined to commence actor, and engaged himself with the Manager of the Bath theatre in June 1790, where he continued for one season. He then repaired to Manchester, from thence to Norwich, and afterwards went back to Manchester; at all which places he was noticed by the people not only as a singer, but as a performer of merit. From the last-mentioned city he came up to London, and we find him now filling a very respectable rank in Covent-Garden Theatre; and we are happy in being able to add, that his private conduct is highly esteemed by all those that have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

MR. KNIGHT.

THE subject of these memoirs was born in Dorsetshire, and is the son of a very respectable country gentleman, well known in that county. Mr. Knight, who received a liberal education, and was originally destined for the bar, unwilling that any means should be left unattempted, to justify the opinion of his friends, that he would make a rapid progress in the profession, availed himself of the experience and instructions of that able veteran, Macklin, and made considerable progress under his tuition, in the study of oratory;

tory ; and this gentleman is another striking instance, that neither the private nor the public character of his pupils ever manifested a want of discrimination in the aged tutor.

Mr. Knight's intention of going to India having been frustrated by the unexpected death of his brother there, and his genius impelling him rather to court the Muses, than to remain fettered in the dull trammels of the law, he turned his thoughts towards the stage, where, by a happy exertion of his talents, and a steady and uniform conduct in private life, he has acquired fame, honour, and advantage. For the first five years, he performed at the York theatre, with credit to himself, and satisfaction to the Public. He then entered into the Bath company, where he has for eight years filled a respectable cast of characters, and is now engaged by Mr. Harris, under whose liberal management we have little doubt but his reputation will encr^{ea}se with his years.

In justice to Mr. Macklin, we cannot omit mentioning, that Mr. Knight being about to leave town, waited on his ancient preceptor, when, after some general conversation, he politely thanked Mr. M. for the great benefit he had received from his instructions ; he lamented that it was not in his power to make a suitable return ; and having only pecuniary gratification to bestow, begged Mr. M.'s acceptance of a testimony of his gratitude. The veteran replied, " If I have served you, I am well satisfied." Mr. Knight, however, persisting in his benevolent intention, like Old-Lear, Macklin felt what he *once* had been, and pushed him out at the door.

MR. POWELL.

THIS Gentleman is a very useful performer, and, perhaps, might be made more so, if oftener brought forward.

He was bred a cook, and from what reason we know not, turned his attention towards the stage. For a long time, we understand, he was a strolling player, but gaining a permanent situation at the Bath theatre, he represented a list of respectable parts to the entire satisfaction of the play-going people of that city. His wife was also engaged at the same house, at which they both remained until the year 1789, when they were discharged, in consequence of some disagreement with the managers.

He has been now employed at Covent-Garden for some time, and is likely to remain there, as he has rendered himself of considerable service to the company, and agreeable to the Public.

MR. THOMPSON.

THE memoirs of this Gentleman, were they in our possession, would not, we are persuaded, be entertaining to our Readers. The humble situation which he has for so many years occupied at Covent-Garden, without ever in one instance, during the whole period, displaying the smallest claim to a higher, renders it unnecessary for us to give ourselves

selves the trouble of gaining particulars of his life; we should, however, consider our conduct culpable, were we to close these few lines without observing, that, although we have nothing to say worthy of notice respecting his *public* character, still no man sustains his *private one* with greater merit, or is more entitled to praise in such a station than Mr. Thompson.

MRS. POPE.

THIS Lady is descended from a good family of the name of Younge. She was left, we may say, almost destitute when very early in life; and before she had made any attempt on the stage, she attracted the notice of a learned Serjeant of Law, now no more, who taking advantage of her situation of dependence, made her such advantageous proffers, that she at last consented to live with him. In this state she remained for some time, until a separation having taken place, for what reason we know not, she had no alternative left but to follow what she thought would produce the most immediate pecuniary assistance; and the stage possessing powerful attractions to a mind like her's, she waited upon Mr. Garrick, and requested permission to perform at his theatre. After some preparatory instruction from that gentleman, she made her first appearance in the part of *Imogen* in the year 1768; and her manner of going through so difficult a part was so highly creditable to herself, that our English Roscius began to entertain a high opinion of her talents, which he thought (as it has

has so turned out) in time would arrive to great excellence. He instructed her in many of the capital parts in tragedy and comedy. In the midst of her growing fame, she went over to Dublin, and there became a first-rate actress. Mr. Garrick wishing, however, to have her assistance again at his theatre, made her a very handsome offer, which she accepted, and she once more re-assumed her rank in Drury-Lane. Mrs. Yates being engaged at the same house, the first parts were divided between them; and each had their separate admirers, until a dispute arising between these scenic heroines, Miss Younge went over to Covent-Garden.

In the year 1784 she visited Ireland; and when performing at Corke she saw Mr. Pope sustain a few characters with such considerable merit, that she wrote over to Mr. Harris greatly in his favour; and he was engaged by that gentleman in consequence. They soon became man and wife; and they both at present enjoy most respectable situations in Covent-Garden.

MISS WALLIS.

THIS favourite actress was born at Richmond, in Yorkshire, and when very young went on the stage and played parts fit only for a child, in a company to which her parents belonged. In the midst of wretchedness ever concomitant to a strolling life, Miss Wallis happened to be seen playing in a barn by the present Chancellor and his Lady. These dignified characters immediately patronized her, and, it is said, had proper tutors provided in-order to give a finish to her education.

cation. Her Ladyship soon felt herself greatly prepossessed in her favor, and assisted her with whatever she wanted. Her mother about this time died, and the husband was left with eight children, our heroine the eldest, without the necessary means of supporting them. To effect this was the principal object of Miss Wallis's attention; and after having made an unsuccessful attempt at Covent-Garden some years ago, she repaired to Bath and Bristol, where she was soon much noticed by the people as a performer of merit. She continued playing alternately at those theatres for some time, until Mr. Harris, who is ever upon the watch to catch hold of what is worth preserving for the Public, saw her perform at Bath, and immediately engaged her for the ensuing winter. After delivering a farewell address to her admirers in that city, she came up to London and made her appearance at Covent-Garden. Curiosity was considerably raised to see her; but it must be admitted, that her performance did not answer the expectation formed of her talents. She is, however, fixt for a certain time in the theatre at an enormous salary, 18l. per week; and when the stipulated period of her engagement expires, we take it for granted her income will be lessened. She is, however, an acquisition as the stage stands at present.

MRS. MERRY.

THIS Lady's father's name is Brunton, and is manager of the Norwich company. He was formerly a grocer, but quitted business in order that he might follow his inclinations.

nations of going on the stage. After trying at one or two places, he was engaged at Bath, where he became a favorite. He soon set about instructing his daughter in the profession, and the present subject of our attention made her *début* in Bath in the year 1785, as the *Grecian Daughter*; and to the astonishment of most of her friends, who did not entertain much expectations of her success, she was received with the most unbounded applause, and which they were amazed to find her exertions justly merited. She afterwards appeared in many other characters, in all of which she discovered so much real ability, that Mr. Harris was determined she should not slip through his fingers, and immediately engaged her, thinking, from what he heard, that she would be able to play against Mrs. Siddons, who at that time was very attractive at the other house. In this idea he was too sanguine; for however justly Miss Brunton's powers deserved commendation, still they fell far short of those belonging to the above Lady. Our heroine made her *entrée* before a London audience in the part of *Horatia*, in the *Roman Father*, and the most liberal applause attended her throughout the whole of the character. After she had appeared in several other plays, she was much talked of, and had she not had so great a rival at Drury-Lane to contend with, she would have brought more money into Covent-Garden treasury than she did. She continued performing during the season with undiminished success: but we think in the following, she lost a good deal of her attraction.

Mr. Merry, the poet, now paid serious addresses to her, and married her. The happy couple soon after set off to France, where they remained, until the alarming complexion of affairs in that country soon compelled them to return.

Since

Since her marriage she has not appeared upon the stage, but we sincerely hope that we shall hereafter be enabled to state, in the future editions of this work, that she has again entered her name on the list of theatrical performers.

MRS. MATTOCKS.

THIS Lady's father and mother were strollers in the country, where she was born; and when arrived to a time of life to choose what pursuit she would like to follow, in order to gain a subsistence, she immediately fixed upon the stage, as the one more agreeable to her wishes than any other. Her first trial was in singing parts, but it was discovered her *forte* did not lie in that way, so that when she visited the metropolis, she tried many parts in low comedy, and in those she soon began to be much noticed by the Town. Mr. Mattocks, a singer in the same theatre, about this time paid his addresses to her, but owing to some obstacles in the way of their union here, they both went to France, and there became man and wife. On their return, they were each of them engaged at Covent-Garden, and for some years lived together with apparent felicity. The lady, however, not being able to withstand the formidable attacks of the present Mr. Benson, of Drury-Lane, she yielded to his requests, and this *beauteous pair* was blessed with a reciprocation of favors. The husband complained, and for a time refused to enter into a reconciliation with the repentant fair one. Things, however,

however, were at last settled between them, and all improprieties buried in oblivion.

Mr. Mattocks became manager some time after of the Liverpool theatre, but the concern turning out very unprofitable, he relinquished it; and his wife, who had played there with wonderful success, came again to her old situation with Mr. Harris, and the husband went to Major Halliday's house, where, we believe, he resided until the Major's death, which happened but a short time ago. What is now become of him we know not.

Mrs. Mattocks still keeps her station in the theatre, and is deservedly a great favorite

MRS. MARTYR.

THIS Lady is the daughter of Mr. Thornton, formerly a taylor in Southampton-Buildings. She had very early imbibed a great partiality for dramatic amusements, and, fortunately for her, possessed talents to keep pace with her inclinations. She first sung at Vauxhall, and with considerable applause. At the close of the season she was engaged at Covent-Garden: here her success was highly flattering, and Miss Thornton became as much run after in consequence of her sprightly agreeable manner, as her sweetness of singing. Crowds of beaus flocked around her; and report says, she was not entirely *insensible* of some of their attractions, but made on her part a proper *return*. She, however, received offers of marriage from a Captain Martyr, and readily agreed

to

to his proposal. Her amours were, nevertheless, much talked of, and her conjugal fidelity was frequently impeached. The husband seeing the turn of mind of his wife (which he might have easily discovered before he married) left her, and we believe at last died in the King's-Bench prison.

She lived afterwards with Mr. Wild, the prompter, who having broke one of his legs, suffered all the inconveniences of a long confinement. It is said that during his indisposition, Mrs. Martyr administered to his assistance very materially. We know not with whom she at present lives. She stands very high in the favor of the Town in her public capacity.

MRS. MOUNTAIN.

THIS Lady's maiden name was *Wilkinson*, sister of the famous *wire-dancer*. She articled herself to the managers of the Royal Circus, not being able to do better for herself, and with them she remained during the whole of the period for which she was bound. When it expired, she went to York, and there became a great favorite in almost every thing she attempted. She continued in this company for a few seasons, and then came up to London, and got an engagement at Covent-Garden, at which theatre she made, at first, but little impression, owing, it is supposed, to the extravagant encomiums on her merit as a finger, previous to her appearance, which she was by no means entitled to. She became, however, a useful performer; and the beauty of her face, and

modesty of her manners, made her acceptable to the Town in second rate singing parts. About this period, Mr. Mountain, the violin player, belonging to the same theatre, was so pleased with her person, that he married her. She was for some time absent from London, owing to a disagreement between her and Mr. Harris, respecting an increase of salary, but she thought, at last, it would be much better to return to her old station.

She occasionally sings in the Summer at Vauxhall, with a considerable degree of credit to herself.

MRS. CLENDINING.

MRS. CLENDINING was born in Wiltshire; and her father, whose name was Arnold, was bred in the choir at Salisbury. His fame as a singer was very great; and having received a pressing invitation to accept of a situation in the cathedral of Dublin, he went over to that city, with his family, where he died in less than two years after. The daughter was now compelled to try whether her talents could gain her a subsistence, and she made an attempt at the Rotunda, where her voice was particularly admired. Soon after her first appearance, she married a Mr. Clendining, a surgeon, who took her entirely from her public situation. For several years after this, she was known only in a private station; but whether from a want of economy in their private concerns, or from what other reasons we know not, our heroine was reduced again to the necessity of turning her mind

to

to the public exercise of her vocal powers. With this intention she came over to London ; but not finding it so easy to accomplish her wishes as she first thought, she repaired to Bath, and in a short time sung in one of the concerts. Her reception was highly flattering ; and after having received some instructions from *Rauzzini*, the famous musician of that city, she took a part at most of the other concerts there, with such considerable applause, that Mr. Harris enlisted her into his company. As she had never appeared upon a stage, doubts were of course entertained of her dramatic talents ; but, although at first they were not any way striking, still she has since made sufficient improvement to place her equal as an actress to some of our most capital singers. She is, nevertheless, no great favorite with the Town, although her voice is pleasing and extensive.

She has been a widow since the year 1793.

MRS. HARLOWE.

THE family of this Lady is unknown to us. The name which she goes by at present is an assumed one ; and before she approached the metropolis, we understand she was for a long time a stroller in the country. The first place where she was noticed was at Windsor, where Mr. Wallron, of Drury-Lane, had a company performing. It is said that the manager and our present heroine became enamoured of each other ; or, at least, that the first possessed an ardor to enjoy what the other did not make many scruples to grant.

In return, the gentleman by his interest obtained her an engagement at Sadlers-Wells, where she soon became a very great favorite. Her sprightliness of manners, and the pleasing taste she displayed in her singing, made her an object to the London managers, and those of Covent-Garden, ever more active than the others to procure what is likely to afford the least entertainment to the Public, engaged her at their house. Her success has been what might be expected, such as her powers are entitled to, and which place her in the theatre as a useful, but by no means an actress that has the smallest claims to excellence.

MISS CHAPMAN.

MISS CHAPMAN is a native of America, which country she left when hostilities broke out between Great-Britain and her colonies, in the year 1775, and came over to England. She resided for some time with a relation in Yorkshire, but a disagreement having taken place between them, Miss Chapman, who had entertained some partiality for an actor belonging to a company that were performing in the town where she resided, took the opportunity, and eloped with him. His name was *Morton*, and they were in a short time married. Necessity, combined with inclination, soon brought her on the stage, and her reception being equal to her most flattering expectations, she continued for some years, conjointly with her husband, performing most of the principal characters. During this period, it is said, she experienced

perenced from her husband the most severe and inhuman treatment, insomuch that she was at last under the necessity of quitting him entirely, and reassuming her maiden name, went to Chester, where she joined the company there. After performing in that city with considerable applause, she repaired to Cheltenham. In the Summer of 1788 she played at Margate, at which place she was so much noticed, that Mr. Harris engaged her at his theatre. She has made a tolerable respectable stand in London, which may, perhaps, be owing more to the shewy elegance of her person than to any intrinsic merit in her as an actress.

MRS. KNIGHT.

THIS Lady is a younger sister of that inimitable actress Miss Farren. As we have already spoken of that lady and her family in the memoirs which relate to herself, little remains to be said of her sister. We shall only add, that for years she has been a favorite on the Bath stage, where we presume her acquaintance with Mr. K. commenced, and she has generally been engaged at the same house with him. Her engagement at Covent-Garden took place at the same time with her husband's, and from the credit which has accompanied the performances of both, it is probable they will hold a permanent situation at this theatre. She has been married about eight years, and a more happy instance of connubial felicity will very rarely be met with.

MRS.

MRS. FAWCETT.

MRS. FAWCETT was born in London, but we are ignorant what situation her parents occupied in society. The first time we find her on the stage was at Edinburgh, under the name of *Miss More*, where she captivated one Mills, a comedian, of considerable merit in that city, and with whom she eloped into England, the gentleman leaving behind him a wife and several children. For a long time they strolled together into most parts of the kingdom, and performed each of them with great success, until he got an engagement in London, at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the year 1783. The lady tried her powers at Drury-Lane about the same time in the part of *Imogen*, but was not so fortunate by her exertions to gain a situation at that house, and the Managers of the other did not think her an object worthy employment. Mr. Mills soon after disagreeing with the Conductor of Covent-Garden, quitted London, and joined the York company, together with Mrs. Mills, as she then past. They distinguished themselves in their separate lines of acting, and became great favourites. In the year 1788 he died, and Mr. Fawcett being soon afterwards engaged by Mr. Wilkinson, paid his addresses to the present object of our memoirs, and a very little time elapsed before they were married. This gentleman, when he got his present situation at Covent-Garden, had sufficient influence to obtain an engagement for his wife, and she has occasionally performed ever since, but with very little addition to her former reputation as an actress.

Hay-Market Theatre.

MOST of the principal performers who are engaged at this Theatre in the summer belong either to Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden, so that our readers will see that they have been already noticed in their proper places. The most conspicuous among those who do not come under this description are the following :

MR. PALMER, JUN.

THIS Gentleman is the son of Mr. J. Palmer, of Drury-Lane. We believe he was not originally intended for the stage, as at a very early period we find him sent off to India, where we understand he did not remain but a short time. On his return, his father put a volume of Shakespeare in his hand, and requested him to read whatever passage he thought proper. This he performed so much to the satisfaction of his parental preceptor, that it was immediately determined to direct his attention to the drama ; and after going through the necessary preparatory studies previous to his appearance, he made his debut at the above theatre in the summer of 1791 in the character of the Prince of Wales, in the First Part of Henry the Fourth. His manner of pourtraying this arduous part was certainly much better than could have been

been expected from so young a man; and in some situations he displayed proofs of his possessing latent powers that in time will, no doubt, render him an acquisition to the stage. Colman immediately engaged him, and he has since increased in public favour. A proper attention to the necessary duties of the profession, and an indefatigable practice of the means by which his talents may be improved, will, we are persuaded, raise him in the theatre to a station both useful and respectable.

MRS. S. KEMBLE.

THIS Lady was born in London, and is the daughter of Mr. *Satchell*, musical-instrument maker, of Great Pulteney-street, Golden-square. Notwithstanding the opposition which her parents made for a long time to her intention of preparing herself for the profession, she was articled at last by their consent to a Mr. Baker, musician, for the purpose of instruction. She soon convinced her tutor that her vocal talents would in time arrive to greater excellence than perhaps has since turned out (her acting powers being infinitely superior to those of her musical); and he in consequence got her engaged at Covent-Garden, where she made her first appearance in *Polly in the Beggar's Opera* in the winter of 1780. She was received with great applause; and after performing many other characters, some of which were in tragedy and comedy, as well as opera, she became a great favourite with the town. In the midst of her popularity she married Mr. Stephen Kemble,

Kemble, at that time in the same house, but who being afterwards discharged, his wife also quitted the theatre at the same time. They both soon after repaired to Liverpool, where Mrs. Kemble was much noticed in the profession; and the same flattering distinction attended her in various other places at which she performed. The late Mr. Colman thinking that his house would be much benefited by her exertions, engaged her in 1786, and from that time she has been employed there in the summer. She is one of our greatest theatrical favourites, and would no doubt be a very considerable acquisition to either Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden.

ALTHOUGH we are perfectly aware that in touching upon the following character we entirely vary from the plan upon which we originally set out, namely, that of mentioning only those principal performers who at present belong to either of the theatres, still being convinced that if we give the memoirs of two Ladies so well known in the theatrical world as Mrs. Merry (inserted among the characters of the female performers at Covent Garden) and Mrs. Elsten, we shall meet the wishes of our readers, we cheerfully consent to a deviation from our former intentions; and that the more readily, when we reflect there is reason to suppose that one, if not both, of them, will ere long return to a profession in which they have so conspicuously excelled.

MRS. ESTEN.

THIS Lady is the natural daughter of the late Admiral Pye, by the well-known Mrs. Bennet, authoress of many a much-admired novel. Miss Bennet, as she grew up, was talked of as a beauty, and she soon captivated the heart of the purser of a man of war of the name of Esten. After some time spent in courtship they were married, and for many years, it is said, lived in a state of domestic felicity, which was strengthened by two lovely infants, the fruits of their mutual endearments. Misfortune, however, came upon them, and the husband having failed in some speculation of which great hopes were entertained, he was at last unable to support his family, and his wife, together with the children, were compelled to return to her mother. What has since become of Mr. Esten we know not.

In this distressed state something it was necessary should be done by the wife, and the stage was advised as the most probable means of her gaining the alleviation to her wants. With the intention of entering the profession, she rehearsed in private before several judges of dramatic merit, all of whom had but one opinion respecting her abilities, which they appeared to think entitled her to a most elevated station in any of the London Theatres. Mr. Harris, to whom she was introduced, and before whom she rehearsed, could not be persuaded of the greatness of her talents, and recommended her, ere she made an attempt in London, to try first in the country; and Bath was mentioned as a place the most likely of

affording

affording her every opportunity she could wish of exercising her powers. She soon repaired to that city, and, without much loss of time, made her *entrée* upon the stage in the character of *Belvidera*. She was received in the most flattering manner; and after repeating the same part, and performing many others there, and at the Bristol theatre, she rose greatly into public notice. She continued for about two seasons, alternately performing at those two places, until a dispute arising between her and the managers, she was discharged. The next place she visited was Dublin, where she procured an engagement; and although her success was considerable, she did not long remain in that city, but repaired to Edinburgh, where she was more noticed by the inhabitants than by any set of people before whom she had yet appeared in her public station. Mr. Harris hearing of her great improvement in the profession, offered her an opportunity at his theatre to make her appearance before a London audience, which she readily accepted. In October 1790 she made her first attempt in the metropolis at the above house in the arduous part of *Rosalind*, in "*As You Like It*;" and although the inimitable Jordan was fresh in the minds of the people, still Mrs. Esten was received with all that warmth of applause which generally attend the exertions of merit before a British audience. She performed the whole season with equal, though not with increased, success; and not having stipulated with the Manager for any salary, she was allowed to take a *free benefit*, which we believe turned out tolerably productive.

Notwithstanding all this success, she found it of considerable difficulty to obtain an engagement, which, it is said, was effected by the Duke of Clarence, who wrote himself a letter, by the request of Mrs. Jordan, to Mr. Harris, particularly

in her favour. It was in consequence of this recommendation that she was employed at the handsome salary of eleven pounds per week.

The Edinburgh theatre being now to be disposed of, and Mrs. Esten having a great number of friends there, a contest arose between them and those of Mr. Stephen Kemble, respecting which of the two performers should have the management of it. The matter was, however, accommodated, and the Lady, report says, relinquished her pretensions for a valuable consideration.

By this time an illustrious northern Duke became greatly enamoured of our heroine, and not being much disheartened from what he heard respecting the great difficulty he would probably have in the endeavour to gain possession of the object of his wishes, he boldly persevered, and before much time was spent in dalliance, he succeeded. This intimacy has been since more strongly cemented, by the Lady having sufficient address to gain the consent of this descendant of the great Douglas, to settle *one thousand per annum* on her for life, as a small recompence, we suppose, for that *immolation of virtue and morality* which she has made on his account. Report says, a lovely babe has been the consequence of this illicit connection.

Of late she has quitted her theatrical life; but some people think she will again return to it, if she can obtain permission from her noble paramour. She has a most superb house in Half-Moon-street, Piccadilly, and lives in all the splendor and elegance of wealth and fashion.

MR. DIBDIN.

THAT solicitude which every person who writes for the entertainment and instruction of the Public ought to feel to supply, by every possible means, the most authentic and useful intelligence the nature of his subject admits of, induced us to send to this *Gentleman*, through the medium of our Publisher, a request that he would furnish us with such information respecting his life, as would enable us to present such an account of him as might be, in every respect, depended upon.

We avail ourselves with pleasure of this opportunity of returning our thanks to those performers, and eminent literary characters, who, on their behalf, have, in consequence of our requests, furnished materials for some of the preceding narratives ; and that we might be enabled to render these memoirs as authentic as possible, we, in common with others, applied to Mr. Dibdin by the following letter :

" SIR,

" Having undertaken to publish *A Pocket Companion to the Playhouses*, and thinking the Work will be incomplete " without some account of a Gentleman, by whose extraordinary exertions the Town has been so long delighted, I " trust you will have no objection to furnish me with some " authentic particulars (those the Editors having collected, " being I fear imperfect) of your history, which I think

" may be beneficial to your place of entertainment, and answer every purpose of an advertisement.

" I am, SIR,

" Your obedient servant,

" B. CROSBY."

In answer to this note, Mr. Dibdin, to convince the Public, we presume, how solicitous he is to contribute to their entertainment, or information, *without being paid for it*, sent the following answer to the Publisher, which we transcribe *verbatim*, as a specimen of his politeness, modesty, and epistolary elegance.

" Mr. Dibdin is astonished at Mr. Crosby's extraordinary request; he not only refuses it, but FORBIDS Mr. Crosby to introduce any thing concerning his life in his production. " If he should, Mr. Dibdin may be under the necessity of publicly contradicting, what, according to Mr. Crosby's own confession, cannot be authentic."

We do not know what respect is in general paid to the *veto* of Mr. Dibdin, but do not feel any great inclination, on our part, to refrain from publishing any thing we know concerning this would-be great man; the only apology we think ourselves called on to make, is to our Readers, whom we are sorry to be unable to gratify to the extent we always wish. We pledge ourselves, however, that though we may be deficient in some points of personal information, we will communicate nothing on the veracity of which our friends may not rely.

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Had Mr. Dibdin condescended to state the fact, we should with pleasure have informed our Readers from what illustrious family in Great Britain, or the plantations, he derives his birth ; but not being furnished with any authentic intelligence on that head, we will not hazard the disclosure of anonymous information, which induces us to attribute the affected concealment to a pride less respectable than that which is denominated family pride.

Having premised thus much with respect to our application to Mr. D. that he would correct any inaccuracy we might have fallen into, we shall proceed to observe, that it has ever been the leading characteristic of Englishmen to reward the efforts of *genius*, and where the most black and infamous *vice* did not accompany *it*, to pass over infirmities if they are trifling, as inseparable from the nature and constitution of man. To this NATIONAL HONOR the Biographer must, in this instance, as the champion of truth, dissent ; and happy indeed would he have been to have dwelt on the *humanity* and *benovolence* of the present object of his research, had any thing like either been found in any one trait of his life. Had he confined himself to exhibit, outwardly, the only *character* which he himself verifies within (*Mungo*), and not have set himself up as a regulator of the morals of mankind, we should have passed him over with that pity which is generally excited when men sink into vice, immorality and debauchery, which even their friends cannot conceal.

The first specimen of talents which introduced Mr. Dibdin to the Public, was a sort of rhyming pastoral drama, of which he was both author and composer, called *Damon and Phillida*, which was brought out at Covent-Garden theatre, but the taste of the Town having already taken a turn against

that species of entertainment, which but a little before had been very popular, it gained him no great applause or profit, though it is not without merit, and, for a juvenile performance, is entitled to be spoken of with favor.

He first gained notice as an actor by his performance of *Ralph* in the *Maid of the Mill*, where he blended, in the most happy manner, the grossness and awkwardness of rusticity with a sort of archness which was highly relished by the Town. But universality of acting was not his *forte*, few parts would suit him, and his dramatic reputation would have languished, and dwindled into nothing, but for the active friendship of Mr. Bickerstaff, author of the above piece, who recommended him to Garrick, by whom he was retained as composer and actor. His fame in both these lines reached its greatest height by his music for, and performance of the part of *Mungo*, in *The Padlock*. This piece was written by Mr. Bickerstaff, and honoured with the frequent attendance of the King of Denmark, to whom, on publication, it was dedicated.

The music is composed in a style which excited the envy of the Italian masters ; the songs, " Say, little foolish fluttering thing," and, " Were I a shepherd's maid," were declared by them to be plagiarisms ; and many went so far as to assert they were common Venetian ballads ; but we look on these reports the mere offspring of jealousy ; for though idleness, and inattention, have prevented Dibdin's composing since that time any thing comparable to those pieces, he shews talents enough in that line to convince us, that if he had studied with diligence, and not permitted his abilities to contract a rust, they would have rendered his name as a composer truly eminent. As to the acting of Mungo, it was a novelty,

velty, and therefore took with the Town, but there is nothing in the part which demands great abilities in an actor, and on the whole, we think the applause it gained more than commensurate to its merit.

In his youth, Mr. Dibdin married the daughter of a respectable tradesman, with whom he is reported to have received a handsome portion, and to have deserted her so soon as it was dissipated ; perhaps we know not the exact truth of all these circumstances, but are able to state as absolute facts, that he was married to a woman who had no great share of beauty to recommend her ; that he deserted her, that she now is shut from his door, pining on a scanty pittance, though no imputation of any kind was thrown on her character.

Time and talents squandered away, subjected Mr. Dibdin for many years to the odious familiarity of those impudent fellows John Doe and Richard Roe : his theatrical merits were inadequate to insure a permanent engagement, and he neglected his musical talents too much to derive from them a supply for his wants, real and imaginary. Hence we see him for years occupied in the degrading task of composing burlettas for the Royal Circus, and in strolling the country, uttering a whimsical farrago of recitation and music, for a temporary and precarious support.

At length he resolved again to try the metropolis, and published his *Musical Tour*, which abounds with egotism, vanity and ribaldry ; he asserts that the present Prince of Wales was so charmed with his singing his *High mettled Racer*, as to detain himself from the opera, on an evening when the first favourite singer made her first appearance.— He commenced an entertainment of recitation and singing,

to encrease the popularity of which, and excite curiosity, he published weekly one song together with an essay, price 6d. under the name of the *By-stander*. In this work he pretends to give a history of the *Greek Theatre*, from that language, although we think him very deficient in the first principles of his own. He has, it is true, a smattering of French, from which, with the assistance of his printer, that history was translated.

The very pretty and popular song of Poor Jack, raised his reputation so much, that he began to take permanent hold on the public favor, and from the mode of publishing above mentioned, and a shed in the piazza, Covent-Garden, he sold his songs for a shilling and half a crown each, at a shop, we beg pardon, a warehouse, in the Strand. His subsequent exhibitions have been much favored by the public, though deficient in wit, genius, fancy and invention: and we pledge ourselves to prove, that in his volume of songs there is not a new phrase, nor any expression which has the appearance of originality, that may not be found in Roderic Random.

His known intimacy with Mr. Bickerstaff, while in England, produced a suspicion in the minds of many persons, that that gentleman was the author of some works performed and published as Mr. Dibdin's, but the question was referred to a jury of Tradesmen instead of Critics, and he established a right to damages against a printer of a newspaper, who had been incautious enough to make such an assertion.

Mr. Dibdin is also the author of a novel called the *Younger Brother*, on which we shall only observe, that the original manuscript being found extremely deficient, he was again indebted

indebted to the perusal of a literary hireling, and the care of a judicious *printer*, for rendering it what it now is. We do not, however, hesitate to affirm, that the superior characters possess no affinity to nature or gentility, nor the subordinate ones any pretence to wit or humor.. The town is again threatened with a similar production this winter; a ricketty cadet of the same house.

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